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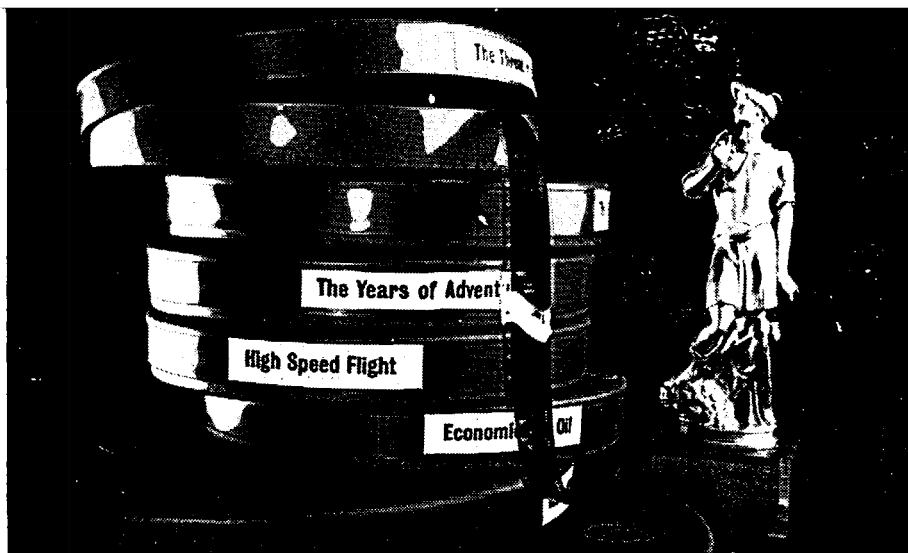
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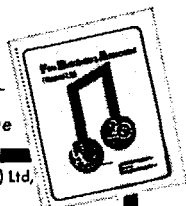
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Foreword

In this issue, we continue our series of occasional articles on individual films with David Williams's analysis of *An Actor's Revenge* in which he approaches the film in the context of traditional Japanese theatre and prints. The somewhat neglected area of Eastern European cinema is discussed by Suzanne Budgen and Philip Crick. The former gives her impressions of films shown at the Pécs Festival whilst the latter looks at the conflicts and tensions in the work of Makavejev, Menzel and Jancso. Tom Ryall and Edward Buscombe examine the concept of genre and its role in a film criticism which has become to some extent dominated by the *auteur* theory.

We are also printing two interviews with people currently working in films and television, Michael J. Lewis and Douglas Camfield. Michael J. Lewis is the composer of the music for *The Madwoman of Chaillot* and Douglas Camfield has directed numerous television programmes including episodes of *Z Cars* and *Paul Temple*.

Of particular relevance to those in education are the complementary articles on the role of film in the Humanities Curriculum, which approach the subject from the theoretical and practical points of view. Both contributions appear in the form approved by the Director of the Humanities Curriculum Project. Colin McArthur, Editor of Film Materials at the BFI, has written about the problems of extract selection and we are especially pleased to have contributions on these important subjects which relate to educational policy. The Education Department of the British Film Institute has been the most important source for Film Teaching Material in extract form in recent years. Some teachers have expressed concern about the policy and methods of extract selection. It is good, therefore, to have the area clarified, and most encouraging to note that some indication of the reasons for the choice of a particular illustration will now be supplied with the extract. Some teachers have certainly felt that their suggestions have been ignored in the past and have not known of any consultation taking place. Such a step is most welcome. It would be valuable to know what kind of teacher has been involved in the selection process; if a teacher is willing to help in this capacity, for example, what kind of procedure exists to allow him to play a role. This is not generally known and it would not be easy to find many teachers who have participated.

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An Actor's Revenge

David Williams

The difficulties for most Western critics in talking about a Japanese film are familiar. Thwarted not only by simple ignorance of language and custom but by more insidious troubles, such as the attractions of foreignness itself, we are likely to be interested in a Japanese film precisely because it is not of our own country. We are always uneasy about interpretation or about attaching ludicrous values to a routine piece of work. However well-intentioned, we remain tourists. Even the suspicion that some films, in their exoticism, are aimed exclusively at Western audiences is a feeling familiar to the discriminating tourist in search of the authentic.

But the tourist has a role which he can accept and exploit on safer ground with 'period' films than with those of modern life. The more subtle a film-maker's observation of people and situations in his own society, the less likely is an outsider to understand the judgements he is making. In a film like *Tokyo Story* for instance, the seriousness and the assured control of pace and detail is impressive, and in a general way one can be moved by the picture of the relationship between the generations which seems not entirely bounded by Japanese attitudes. But the European can only defer to the Japanese who tells him where he finds it sentimental or ironic (if at all), whether this speech or that action is normal or aberrant.

Historical films, on the other hand, are set apart by their period and intention even for a Japanese audience. It is even customary in Japan to make a distinction between stories set before the Meiji restoration in 1868 and those after. As in the West, period films tend to be vehicles for simple entertainment or for universal statement of a kind accessible to outsiders. In *Ugetsu Monogatari* and *Seven Samurai* the directors use the carefully recreated period to make a convincing self-contained world for their themes, whose internal logic can be appreciated by a Westerner as much as a Japanese – apart of course from the language. But ignorance of a language concentrates the mind wonderfully on other aspects of a film, especially formal and visual ones, and this can be no bad approach to masters of form and visual style such as Kurosawa and Ichikawa.

Despite its period setting *An Actor's Revenge* (*Yukinojo Henge*) seems to have been an exception to some of these generalizations. Even amongst the more sympathetic reviews in this country a predominant impression was one of remoteness. Penelope Houston¹ described its ingredients with a nice accuracy but called it 'after all, the product of an alien sensibility' – even the word 'inscrutable' appears. The reluctance expressed by some people about taking the film on its own terms might almost have resulted from the conviction that the life of the sexually ambiguous actor in the early nineteenth century was a phenomenon of modern Japan – that familiarity was necessary for understanding. Whereas strangeness is part of what Ichikawa saw in it too, however local the history. If his treatment of this strange hero and his predicament is sympathetic, then that is the point.

Yukinojo is an actor of female roles on the Kabuki stage where women do not play. As the custom then was, he continues his impersonation in off-stage life. Since childhood he has been waiting his chance to revenge the death of his parents on three Edo merchants who had driven them to suicide. In the film, his company have come to Edo and we watch him conduct a plot which causes the three to dispose of each other with the maximum of remorse at their guilt. The plot also makes use of and destroys the daughter of the most powerful of the three (Lord Dobe) who has fallen in love with Yukinojo. The actor is encouraged by the manager of the company and helped, hindered, or merely observed by a number of low-life characters. Most important is Yamitaro, a virtuoso thief whose resemblance to Yukinojo is no mere accident of his being played by the same film actor. Ohatsu is a female pickpocket attracted both to Yamitaro and Yuki. More than once Yukinojo is attacked in the dark by a man with a grudge against him for his success in a school of swordsmanship where he himself forfeited the highest honour through impatient pride. His motive, one could say, is an irrational version of revenge. Such formally patterned plot and character relationships are a characteristic of the film.

An approach to all this was made by Tom Milne,² treating it appropriately enough, as a kind of Jacobean revenge tragedy but also as an example of Ichikawa's interest in a certain sort of hero, a man in some way at odds with the world he lives in. The trouble is that this makes the actor's female role a withdrawal 'from his proper place in society', instead of a proper, even customary, and yet intriguingly paradoxical one. When a Kabuki actor continued his female pose into his real life it was an expression of his dedication to his craft and an assertion of pride in his specialized skill and popular acclaim. On the other hand it is clear that, in the film at least, we are meant to see that for some people Yuki's role can prove both fascinating and disconcert-

ing, although others accept him without pause. The same reviewer was led to suggest further that Yukinojo is ill-equipped for revenge because of his female role. It is true that the actor's sympathies and delicate awareness of moral obligations frequently seem to beset his purpose (this too is a common theme in the Jacobean plays), but in other respects his double role, especially its female side, disturbs our expectations by being exactly fitted for his plot. His seeming vulnerability is deceptive.

Critics seemed to discuss the idiosyncratic visual style of the *Revenge* only as a curious decorative adjunct to the story, whereas I would rather say it is the key to the film and in a way part of its theme. This makes for serious difficulties in discussing it without being able to illustrate with full colour and from particular scenes. But these are normal obstacles in writing about such a medium and the attempt must be made. What is inescapable in the *Revenge* is its self-consciously spectacular appearance and structure full of tricks and jokes and all in stylishly rich and flamboyant colour. It is also under the kind of total control by the director one associates with an animated cartoon. Ichikawa of course began his career in cartoons, and has spoken of his keenness to have this control over every aspect of a work (although the making of *Tokyo Olympiad* led him to appreciate the possibilities of fortuitous effects). He designs his own sets, and says: 'I'd probably do the music too if I could'.³

The plane of the screen is often used as a cartoonist would. In one scene figures traverse it, beginning small in the top left-hand corner and growing as they come 'down' right. Meanwhile the rest of the screen is blank and solidly dark. For swordplay at night it is a deep blue-black space, where only a face or a slashed paper lantern in flames or the flash of blades meeting, show and vanish, with appropriate sound effects of intense clarity. The attempts of two men to capture Yamitaro become a hilarious pantomime ballet where the only background, apart from the deep darkness, is a long, tile-topped wall the ends of which even the cinemascope screen never shows. At one moment the screen is occupied only with the noose thrown in pursuit of the running Yamitaro as it snakes gleaming white across the dark space.

Scenes are often set in this darkness or in the controlled environments of interiors with their partitions and beams, so that although so little of Yuki's story happens on stage, the 'reality' of even off-stage events is thus reduced and presents no clear contrast. The wood in which Ohatsu waits for Yukinojo is a very stagey affair with artificial-looking trees. This is to say nothing of the fact that, in his eagerness to follow the fortunes of his double, Yamitaro is able to walk vertical walls on all fours!

The sources for such details need not matter, but the whole style that



The actor Bando Shuka playing the woman Shira Ito in the play of *Sumida-gawa*. Colour print by Kunisada

results has some affinities with the look of Japanese colour prints and with the visual impact of Kabuki plays. The direct relevance of the prints is extremely doubtful since many of their techniques are found also in strip cartoons and other media: when Yukinojo is considering



Namiji awaits Yukinojo

his future victims who sit in a box in his audience, their faces appear inset above his head. This is familiar enough as a 'thinks' bubble, but the prints also use insets. The purpose is normally rather different, to expand by allusion the story in the main picture or, for instance, over a portrait, to call to mind the event for which the subject is famous, but the appearance of such insets in relation to the whole composition is often similar to the cartoon convention. I should be surprised to learn that Ichikawa had any such specific source in mind for the inset, but a comparison between the two media, of the prints and of film as Ichikawa uses it in the *Revenge*, is still of some interest. Japanese colour prints use a wide range of technique in visual presentation, dividing the picture area to show simultaneous scenes and superimposing names, captions, even whole stories. The result, with its formal conventions and decorative stylizations on the one hand and caricature realism on the other, achieves a unified effect analogous to the method and style of the film.

In any case, for anyone wishing to know about the life of Japan during this strange period when the Shoguns ruled, the colour prints and illustrated books are a major source of information. In particular they show the extraordinary town life, centring on the theatres and the official brothel quarters. A chief preoccupation of artists like Kuniyoshi Kunisada and their public was actors and plays. Stories and scenes from

favourite plays are depicted over and over. Extremely numerous too are the portraits of actors, usually in the dress and character of their outstanding roles, not unlike superior kinds of pin-up. When Ohatsu is seen in her room daydreaming, and finally kicking and squirming in frustration over the mysterious Yukinojo, she has been looking at a book of such prints.

Kabuki itself is more clearly a contributor to the film, but less in details than one might have thought. Near the start and end of the film we see fragments of Kabuki plays, and the difference between them and the essentially realistic acting in the rest of the film is clear. Anderson and Richie warned against easy comparisons between Japanese films and the traditional arts, especially the theatre.⁴ Japanese styles of acting can still be faintly disconcerting (and one can hardly be satisfied with Anderson and Richie's explanation of this as the result simply of ebullient Japanese temperament) but the styles in films are in most cases a very long way from Kabuki or Noh.

However, in the *Revenge* the theatre is actually part of the subject matter. From the earliest days Japanese film-makers have used story material from Kabuki plays and have often shown interest in taking over some of the theatre's methods. The recent *Double Suicide*, directed by Masahiro Shinoda, is a striking instance of such borrowed techniques, and is based on a play by the great Chikamatsu who wrote for the puppet and Kabuki theatres in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ichikawa himself is reported as placing high amongst his own works a puppet film made in 1946 and now lost. A film made the year before by Kurosawa, *Tora no O o Fummu Otokotachi*, is another variation of the 'play' film. It is based very closely on one of the most popular of all Kabuki plays, *Kanjinchō*, and its heroes are old favourites in Japan, but the method of presentation is a mixture. There is a chorus who sing narrative and commentary, but in a style nearer to Western music than a Kabuki chorus. The setting in a forest often seems like a stage but, although the action is formalized it is acted and not danced. A comic character has been added, a kind of ridiculous common man, who directs the audience's attention to particular aspects of the world of the main characters, all noble warriors. Through the comedian the film becomes a comment on the traditional heroes and story of the play and therefore on the values they represent. It has been called a parody of its original but that is very misleading. It rather extends and enriches some of its latent themes. The mockery intensifies and modifies rather than reduces our sympathy with the heroes.

It is useful to have in mind such other examples of the use of the theatre in Japanese films when considering the *Revenge*, mainly because

of the differences. The *Revenge* is based not on a play but on a novel, and does not depend, like the Kurosawa, on our recognition of a source (an explanatory preface to the English version of the Kurosawa film was rightly considered necessary). Its connexions with the theatre, apart from explicit ones in the story, are a case rather of analogy than of simple borrowing. Kabuki was a theatre of spectacle depending much on visual effect (with music) and formalized acting, often much more like dance, or actually incorporating dances, calling for immense technical skill. At climaxes and significant moments of tension and emotion (announced by the musical accompaniment) an actor would freeze in a significant and expressive posture. At such moments the audience might shout its approval if the pose was well done. It was a theatre of stars. Despite the formality of performance, the huge Kabuki stages, as can be seen from the opening snow scene in the *Revenge*, were used to achieve a sort of artful realism. The stylistic affinity with the film is clear, and especially in the way the effects advertise themselves. The audience for such plays was meant to enjoy the bravura of the effect and the acting performance as much as the story they depict, and the same is surely true of the film.

The air of unreality the film imparts even to off-stage events is neatly appropriate to the presentation of life in Edo (the old Tokyo) in that era. The prints, for their concentration on the fleeting affairs of the brothels and theatres are known as *ukiyo-e*, 'pictures of the floating world'. The time is towards the end of Japan's long and extraordinary period of isolation from outside contacts. The country is still governed under a puppet emperor, by a rigid political and social system, but this is now under great strain. Power still belongs with the Shoguns, military governors, and social convention still reflects the aristocratic class system. This can be seen in the film when the wealthy Lord Dobe, in this context no better than a shopkeeper, crouches trembling before the Shogun in his palace. But in the economy and in daily society it is the merchants like Dobe who matter. Their money finances the power of the Shogunate, they patronize the theatre, the artists and the courtesans, and they also control the rice on which the economy is based. The riots against the price of the staple food in 1836 figure in the film. A caption introduces the menacing, surreal sequences of running and struggling figures flattened and distorted by the wide screen, falls of white rice spilling amongst them. Thus an impressive piece of 'historical reality' is introduced but subordinated to the total style. And not only is the rebellion exploited by Hiromiya, one of the merchants, it also assists the revenge.

The thematic as distinct from stylistic importance of theatre is of course explicit, and deserves careful attention. The film presumably derived the idea of play upon play from the novel, or the book can have supplied very little. To begin with, the whole story of revenge, love and suicide



A scene from the novel Hakkenden. Colour print by Kuniyoshi. Here the inset links the picture with others of a series of well-known places.

is the kind of melodrama that was the staple of Kabuki. Then the structure of the film narrative isolates Yuki's plot as if in a play. The film opens with people discussing the new company arrived from Osaka. Then comes Yukinojo's first appearance, on stage as a woman,



Better than a play. Yukinojo defends himself against odds.

staggering pitifully through falling snow. As she falls we cease to hear the weird intonations of the Kabuki performer, and the sound-track re-focuses on the actor's inner voice as he sees (and so do we in the inset) the murderers of his parents in the audience, and begins his plot. Throughout this sequence Ichikawa adjusts the relative 'reality' of the actor's two situations. If anything, the stage snow looks more like real snow at those moments when we are hearing from the actor's own inner self. We are surely to see Yuki's stage role here as related to his real one, but concentrating deceptively on his lonely suffering rather than on his unnerving capabilities as a righter of wrong. It is the kind of scene the Lady Namiji is to play for real later on. It ends with the entrance of an old man along the gangway that runs at stage level through the audience in Kabuki theatres. But as if to underline the real importance of what is passing on stage, Ichikawa here blots out from the picture the audience we should otherwise see. The great striped curtain is pulled across the stage, neatly filling the cinemascope screen to the sound of applause.

Similarly, we last see Yuki in a play scene, which has a distinct look of a triumphant finale. Yuki does in a way appear again in the last, and in

some ways strangest moments of the film. As a doll-figure (puppet?) disappears gradually in a field of waving grass, a narrator tells us that no one knows what finally became of Yukinojo, and asks us to say which of the characters in the film remembered the story – as if the whole revenge only existed in their accounts.

During the progress of the story indeed, Yamitaro and the others have behaved much like spectators at a play. Ohatsu, watching smugly, finds a swordfight better than a play because of the real weapons. Yamitaro observes his double with great sympathy and admiration as he struggles with the conflicting emotions that dog his purpose. 'An actor's revenge!' he exclaims, watching from a rooftop, 'dramatic as a play!' At one climax in Yuki's fortunes, when he fears his plot is revealed and the gods are against him, these chief watchers are in effect engaged in an argument about how much they should interfere in the 'scene'. Above all Yukinojo's revenge involves a series of finely adjusted performances to deceive and terrify his victims. In the most spectacular of these he enacts the death of his mother and in the role of his father's angry ghost drives the merchant Kawaguchiya insane. Earlier, as he left Namiji's room after their first meeting, the lush romantic music had stopped and he had complimented himself on a well-played love scene.

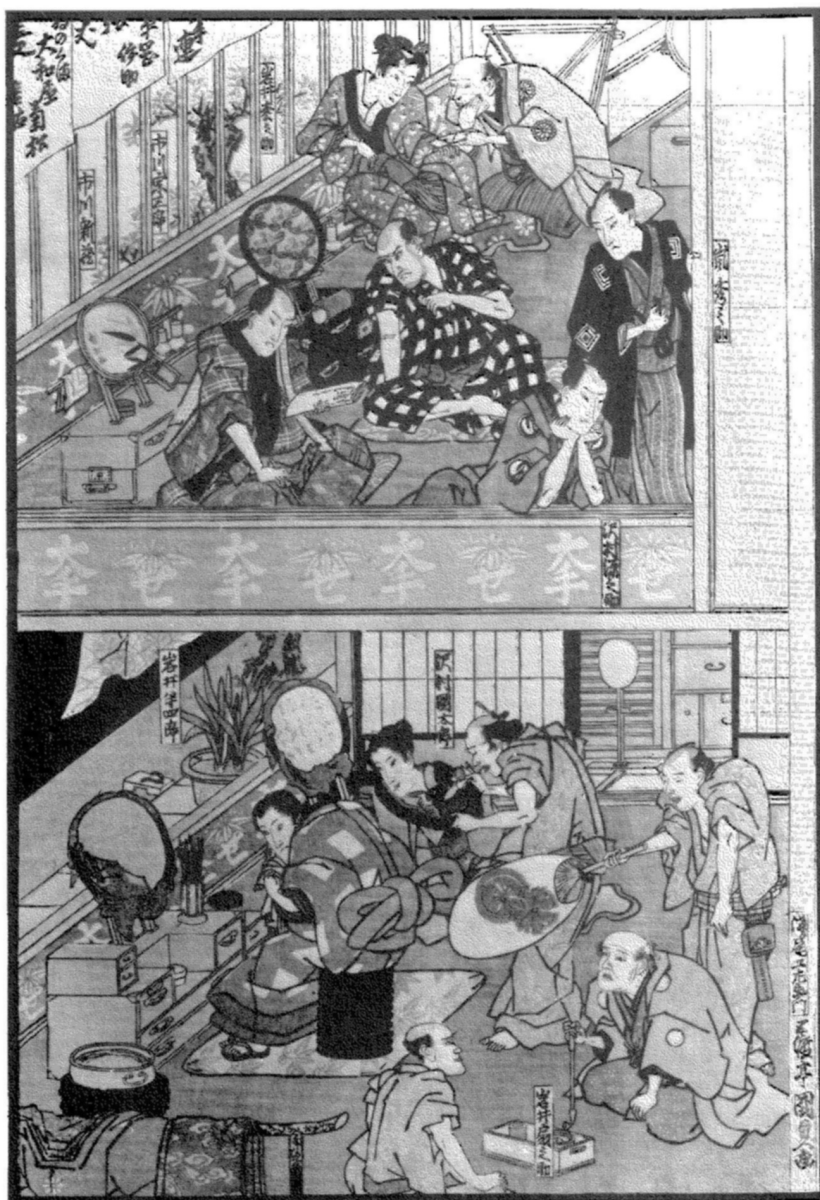
Throughout all these layers upon layers of film and play runs a virtuoso acting performance, in several senses. Kazuo Hasegawa, who plays both leads, is by all accounts one of the great actors of the Japanese cinema, characterized by Anderson and Richie as a sort of *matinée* idol from his early days.⁵ It does not seem impossible that the choice of this kind of star for the film was meant to add one more layer to the theme of the actor – apart from the obvious need for a very special skill to cope with the double role. The effect of the double, or perhaps it should be triple, role is curious.

First we have a woman on stage played by a man. Then in the dressing-room where he should be unmasking perhaps, we find him instead still feminine, simpering delicately at his manager about the revenge he plans, shaken himself at the horror of it but in the end coldly determined. The femaleness is played in a stylized exaggerated way that makes of the whole Yukinojo an extraordinarily convincing, unified character. He seems a man all the time, fulfilling a man's part as avenger, fighter and lover. But the nervously demure and decorously wilting manner is more than a mask, seeming to come from equally deep within as a sensibility of feminine tenderness. And of course it is the lack of overt menace that makes the plot succeed. Yamitaro, on the other hand, becomes a further extension of Yuki. The resemblance between them is more than once pointed out, and when Yuki is re-

solved at the end to give up acting we find Yamitaro deciding to give up thieving. As a man though, and perhaps the man the actor cannot be, he is notably amiable and without violence. He is a kind of Robin Hood. The whole effect is deliberately unsettling. Frighteningly, we can never know what the actor feels about Namiji even as he hurries compassionately to her deathbed. After the elaborately and delicately tearful scene, the body of the unfortunate girl is dumped in a splendid box at her father's house to initiate the last phase of the revenge. Thus the terrible retribution in the hands of this soft-speaking womanish creature circumvents all obstacles. Namiji's extreme and negative feebleness is a fascinating foil here. When they are together it is hard to assess the difference between Yuki's femininity and hers. She is like the princess heroines of some Kabuki plays who are so tender that to walk more than a few paces is anguish to them.

Some problems in the film's style remain. Perhaps it is only the usual concession of period films to modernity that allows Namiji and Ohatsu a decidedly twentieth-century, even 'Hollywood-Japanese' look. More important is the music. To talk in terms of Japanese and Western here may be inappropriate since it is clear that what we think of as Western-style music is just as familiar to a Japanese. Having acknowledged this, there is no simpler way to describe the film's music than to say there are two or three kinds: some traditional-sounding Japanese (of the kind useful for underlining action); some a kind of cool jazz gently backing the secret exploits of Yuki and the thieves; and some lush, sentimental, orchestral strings reserved for the scenes between Yuki and Namiji. It is the last kind that presents a difficulty. When Yuki is clearly putting on an act for the girl, the presence of that music is ironic. Later, when Yuki gives less away to the audience, it might be logical to suppose that the same music is meant to tell us he is still faking. But that seems over simple, especially since the music, however mushy, only derives a clear meaning from the context. We are left with the same love scene but without the explanation this time. The difficulties experienced by directors who want to control the amount and kind of music in their films are familiar, so that all this which looks so deliberate could be accidental after all, but if so it is out of character with the rest.

I have been trying to characterize the style and structure of this film because that is where understanding has to start. If the great richness and cunning of this structure makes us want to commit ourselves about profounder intentions on the director's part, that seems quite in order. Ichikawa himself placed *Revenge* amongst his 'light' rather than 'dark' films – hardly a surprise – which puts it alongside *Tokyo Olympiad* and *Alone on the Pacific*. But it ought to be noticed that 'light' means 'more funny than not', and in the same interview he says, 'if possible, every-



Colour print by Kunisada. Backstage at a theatre. A female impersonator is seen at the top of each layer of the picture.

thing in my films has to be about something else, it has to have a wider relevance than itself. I'm rather like a novelist that way.'

Critics' phrases such as 'The Skull Beneath the Skin' and 'cutting a

little nearer the bone than one expects' look like responses to the layered world of the *Revenge* where games are played with expectations. But it seems ill-advised to abstract a 'meaning' where the form and very material of the film are so much involved. It is as much as anything a brilliant and funny entertainment. The relativity of the real and the staged, of actor and role, is expressive of the many uncertainties of sympathy and obligation, but that is not the only reason for its presence. The actor's dilemmas, although pointed up by his doubleness, are hardly simplified by it. One might say our interest is in watching a man coping with difficulties, some inside and some outside himself, which are reflected for us in the very presentation of the story.

There does seem to be a connexion with preoccupations in other of Ichikawa's films, light and dark, from *Burmese Harp* to *Alone on the Pacific*, but to generalize from them is unsatisfactory. It might be especially misleading to concentrate on the supposed isolation of Ichikawa's heroes and their oddness, or on the oddity of their situations. This may be the result not of the director's interest in oddness for its own sake, but of a wish to sharpen the focus on the individual human being and his integrity and resourcefulness in various contexts. That Ichikawa compares his activity to that of a novelist is relevant here.

In *Kagi, The Key*, notorious for its portrayal of sexually strange relations between a man and his wife and son-in-law, Ichikawa's very choice of the particular novel by Junichiro Tanizaki⁶ as his basis supports this feeling. The oddness of what goes on in the book is dissolved by the lucid, compassionate scrutiny given to it. The situations in which Ichikawa's heroes move often have their universal implications by being rather like controlled experiments or extreme test cases – not least in *Tokyo Olympiad*. If this way of summing up the director's concerns makes him sound rather like a good many other serious writers and directors, then generalization has gone far enough.

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Problems of Providing Film Study Materials

Colin McArthur

I recall my recurrent response, as a teacher in the field, to the BFI Education Department's periodic announcements of new extracts and/or study units being put into distribution. Several questions invariably suggested themselves: why these subjects (directors, national cinemas, themes) rather than others, why this section of a particular film rather than another section, and why so few extracts and units per year? This piece is an attempt to answer these questions from the inside, as I have no doubt they still occur to practising teachers.

The Education Department has had overall responsibility for the provision of film study materials only since 1965. Before this it lay with the BFI Distribution Library within which no-one had *specific* responsibility for study materials nor was there a separate budget for their provision. Since 1965, the Education Department's Editor of Film Materials has been centrally concerned with this job, administering a budget covering royalties and lab. costs. Since, normally, two copies of an extract are made up, one for the Distribution Library and one for the Lecture Service, the annual budget is made up of broadly equal contributions from the Education Department and the Distribution Library, the Head of which is in close touch with the Education Department and is often present at extract selections. Without going into detail here on the financial aspects of providing film study materials, the fact that provision has to be made from an agreed annual budget, subject to the pressures of economic squeezes and the counter-claims of other priorities within the BFI, means that only a limited number of extracts and/or study units is possible in any one year.

However, limited finances is not the only consideration in evolving policy. There is a startling variety of response from the companies owning the rights to potentially useful films. Some, like MCA and Kingston, go out of their way to be helpful, while others, like Paramount and MGM, refuse flatly to discuss the question of film study

materials. Between these two poles there are individual companies who, while prepared to talk, have particular obsessions, with one money, with another the running time of an extract, which can sometimes disrupt negotiations. Such a situation inevitably removes a vast amount of potentially useful material from consideration. However, a change of personnel in the company may reopen the possibility of negotiation.

With a limited amount of money and a restricted choice of material, what extracts and/or study units should one go for? The desire to provide extracts (rather than study units) has been the strongest impulse since 1965, since extracts, because of the rigidity of educational timetabling and the parsimony of education authorities, continue to be the cheapest and most convenient form of film study material. The impulse has been to do block deals with as many companies as possible for as many extracts as possible to achieve a blanket coverage of directors, movements, genres and national cinemas, as well as covering themes which teachers of the humanities might raise in their classes (e.g. courtship, family problems, the work experience, etc). Inevitably, such a policy could be only partially implemented and huge gaps were left. Certain directors and national cinemas were not represented at all and the pull towards material usable in the social studies class meant that other areas of film such as fantasy and horror were badly neglected.

The appointment of the Film Research Officer of the Humanities Curriculum Project to the Department, with a substantial independent budget and clear terms of reference, has meant a reshuffling of priorities in the provision of extracts and study units. The Department no longer feels that the provision of material specifically on themes handled in the humanities classroom is a major priority, although, inevitably, much of the material it now produces will still be useful in that area. For example, there were several criteria behind the recent selection of an extract from *Brute Force*: it exemplifies the work of Jules Dassin, a director previously unrepresented in the extract collection, it illustrates an important sub-genre in the American cinema and is useful in discussing Hollywood in the forties. Some teachers may very well find it useful in discussing the experience of imprisonment although this was not an important criterion of its selection. Thus, it could be said that the Department's orientation to extract selection is now *formalist*, but only if this is defined as being concerned primarily with film as a study in its own right rather than with film as an element in humanities courses. Within this orientation, the current policy regarding extracts is to move away from block deals with single companies towards deals with several companies for one or two extracts which will plug the more glaring gaps in the extract collection. However, sometimes it is possible to use the block deal precisely for this process of filling gaps, especially if the deal is with a

new or previously impenetrable company. The recent deal with MCA is a good example of this, since MCA holds on 16mm Universal Pictures material which previously we have not been allowed to extract from. The following extracts from MCA – each of them representing a director or area of cinema formerly absent from the extract collection – are now in distribution or in the pipeline: *The Killers*, *The Tomb of Ligeia*, *King Kong*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*. There is a further element of policy which is to give special consideration to areas of cinema which figure largely in critical writing and debate: thus, when the deal with MCA freed some later Hitchcock for extracting, it was felt in the Department that although several early Hitchcock extracts exist, the overwhelming critical and film educational interest in his later work justified our extracting from *Psycho* and *The Birds*, both of which have recently become available, and that the similar interest in the Western justified our extracting from a very early example of the genre, *The Covered Wagon* which, among other things, raises questions about the Western's central relationships to American culture. There is an extract from *The Round-Up*, representing the previously absent Hungarian cinema, in the pipeline and in the next financial year we propose to extract from more material from Japan, which is badly underrepresented in the collection. A fair guide to the Department's thinking about the gaps to be filled is contained in the following list from a departmental document about gaps in the extract collection:

French Cinema

Tati; late René Clair; more developed Resnais e.g. *Muriel*; Carné; a French gangster film.

Italian Cinema

1930's white telephone style and a wider coverage of neo-realism taking in films like *Bitter Rice* or *Two Penny Worth of Hope*.

Russian Cinema

An example of contemporary Russian cinema and the 1930's Stalin type film.

The Western

Something representing Westerns of the '20's and '30's; Gene Autry type Western; well-known films like *Shane* and *High Noon*; broader coverage of '40's and '50's taking in directors like Boetticher, Ray, Aldrich, Sturges, etc.

American Cinema

In the general area some examples of '30's comedies and the orthodox war film, like *Hell is for Heroes*, *Men in War*, etc.

The Gangster Film

Some examples of the later '30's gangster film like *The Roaring Twenties* or *Angels With Dirty Faces*; examples of the socially conscious gangster film of the '40's like *Force of Evil*; examples of the late '50's gangster film like *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond*.

Other gaps or areas under-represented: Science Fiction, Horror films, Spy films, *Cinéma Vérité*, Hungarian films, Japan, the Musical.

Directors

Hitchcock (late '50's American work)

Lang (German films of the Mabuse type: one or two more American films)

Hawks (Westerns)

Bergman (comedy)

Griffith (less well-known films)

Chaplin (later films)

Rossellini (films of the *Voyage to Italy* kind)

Visconti (films of the *Senso* kind)

Keaton

Lubitsch

Boetticher

Aldrich

Fuller

Penn

Cukor

Frankenheimer

Walsh

Pasolini

Wyler

Ophuls

Siegel

Murnau

Peckinpah

Chris Marker

Von Sternberg

Torre Nilsson

It would be dishonest to sidestep the fact that, in deciding from which films extracts be taken, the Department makes critical judgements about the relative importance of one director rather than another, one national cinema rather than another and that at certain periods it has led rather than reflected critical and educational opinion. But, paradoxically, the Department's championship of the American cinema in recent years and concomitant extracting from American movies, was carried out within the terms of its current film study materials policy: to represent previously unrepresented areas of cinema and to take account of current critical writing and debate about the cinema. The Department is aware of and concerned about the possibility of an orthodoxy being created in film teaching and has resisted this both internally and externally. For instance, as in other areas of education, innovation in film teaching develops very slowly and the oldest and most tried extracts, e.g. *Bicycle Thieves*, *Odd Man Out*, *Great Expectations*, are under heaviest demand. The recurrent question is should one spend the limited amount of money

reduplicating these extracts, and thus sustain an educational orthodoxy, or spend the money on new material, thus widening the teacher's area of choice. The Department has consistently advocated the latter course. The question of orthodoxy comes up again in relation to the nature of the supporting documentation for extracts. Traditionally, the Department has felt that to offer critical notes with an extract was tantamount to imposing a reading on the person using it, and so, until recently, the extract catalogue has contained lists of credits and a bald statement of the contents of extracts. However, the act of extract selection is an act of criticism: one extracts from a film according to the way one reads it. For this reason, several members of the Department are present at any extract selection, and visiting teachers will remember times when they have been invited to participate. But it seems reasonable that teachers should be aware of the criteria underlying the selection of the extracts they use. Future supplements to the Extract Catalogue will, therefore, include, in addition to credits and synopses, a brief statement about why each extract was chosen.

Study units were evolved to meet and to encourage study in depth of particular areas of cinema. Each of the units in existence consists of a feature film, several extracts and/or short films, and a variety of supporting documentation, and may be hired for one month at a cost of £12. Very little is known about how these units are used, but each is booked very far in advance as soon as it comes into distribution, suggesting that the study unit is a particularly popular way of organizing film material. Working within a limited budget, the Department has traditionally tried to produce a certain number of extracts and one or two units per year. It would, however, be possible to produce say half a dozen units and a substantially reduced number of extracts in one year. The units, once again, are produced in the context of the overall materials policy of as wide coverage as possible and special attention to areas of cinema about which there is current debate. Units which will appear in the future include ones on Hitchcock, the Western, Hungarian Cinema, the Underground Cinema and Satyajit Ray.

The Department periodically attempts to evolve new and/or more experimental forms of film study material. For instance, there is no reason why the standard form of extract, a ten-minute section of one sequence or part of consecutive sequences from a film, need be the only form of extract. The extract from *From Russia With Love* consists of several two-minute sections from the film each indicating an archetypal element of the typical James Bond film, and the extract from *The Covered Wagon* consists of two sections, one indicating the variety of elements present in the Western at this stage of its development (virginal heroine and morally unambiguous hero, the epic dimension, violent action) the

other indicating the presence in the genre of an important debate in American culture (agrarianism versus industrialism). Similarly, there has been a debate within the Department about the desirability of preparing and using in a pack several extracts dealing with the same event but by different directors, thus impelling the teacher to consider not primarily the event itself, but the styles and therefore attitudes of the different directors. For example, suppose a pack were made up consisting of the execution sequences from *Paths of Glory*, *Viva Zapata*, *Les Carabiniers* and *The Victors*, the question is would such a pack predetermine too rigidly the kind of teaching that could be done with it or would it offer the teacher a useful context within which to discuss the relationship between style and meaning in the cinema? In addition, the Department has been discussing the possibility of preparing, for sale or hire, boxes of slides on particular films, directors and genres. If certain internal financial and administrative problems are overcome it seems likely that a start will be made in this area within the year.

To sum up, the policy of what extracts and/or study units to produce is evolved within two major considerations: limited finance and the non-cooperation of certain companies holding useful material. Within these, the current policy is to achieve as wide a coverage of *all* cinema as possible by plugging very obvious gaps in the study unit and extract collections, but in filling these gaps to give special consideration to areas of cinema at the centre of current critical debate and educational interest. This is the first public statement of the Department's film materials policy. It would welcome debate about this policy from teachers in the field.

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The Notion of Genre

Tom Ryall

The purpose of this article is to examine the concept of genre, a term frequently used in criticism of the American cinema. Like many words in the incipient critical vocabulary of the film critic and teacher it has yet to have its usage defined or adequately described.

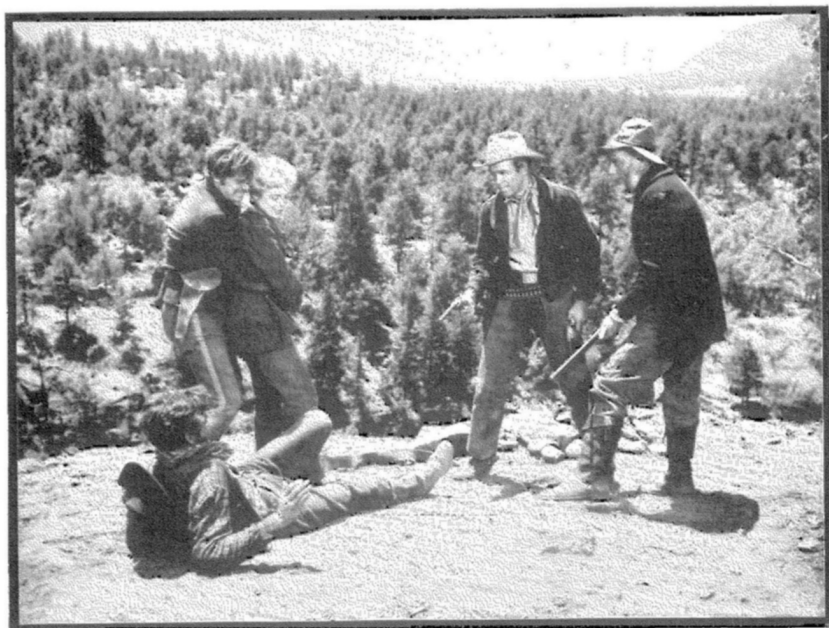
The increased critical interest in the American mainstream cinema (emanating particularly from *Cahiers du Cinéma*) has concentrated largely on specific directors. The proliferation of pantheons (Movie, Sarris, Wollen, *Cinema No. 4*) takes no ostensible account of the notion of genre and has led, in some quarters, to genre being regarded as another factor with which the creative director has to contend, along with front-office pressure, the star, and the script-writer. In the words of Andrew Sarris 'auteur criticism of the Western treats the genre as one more condition of creation'. This may well apply to a director like Samuel Fuller, for example, whose artistic interests are only contingently related to the Western genre. It is more profitable to consider a film such as *Run of the Arrow*, in which a confederate soldier joins the Sioux Indians following the defeat of the South in the American civil war, in the light of Fuller's preoccupation with national identity and the notion of an American. On the other hand, if one considers John Ford, it does seem mistaken to dismiss genre as 'one more condition of creation'. Clearly there is a necessary relationship between Ford's artistic interests and the Western. This is not merely to say that Ford has made more Westerns than other types of film but to emphasize that his evident artistic concern is with the subject material out of which all Western films, however obliquely, are drawn. The subject material, the opening of the American west, is examined in a long cycle of Westerns starting in 1942 with *The Iron Horse* and finishing in 1964 with *Cheyenne Autumn*, and through these films we can perceive the development of Ford's attitude towards this particular segment of his country's history. From the idealism of *Stagecoach* (1939) and *My Darling Clementine* (1946) to the confusions and the cynicism of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) we can trace the development of the genre. It is not useful, and therefore not necessary, to

separate Ford the artist from the genre, as he has been so directly involved in the creation of the complex of historical subject matter, thematic preoccupations and iconography which constitutes the Western genre.

The problem of defining the term has, by and large, been overlooked by critics committed to emphasizing the personality and preoccupations of particular directors, and to individuating a number of previously neglected Hollywood figures such as Fuller and Boetticher. This has shifted awareness away from the positive role of genre in the American cinema.

The term has frequently been used as a synonym for 'type'. Thus film genres include not only Western and gangster films, but also, musicals, social dramas, women's pictures, historical epics, horror films and so on. It does seem appropriate to sort Hollywood's output into a variety of categories or types, indeed the particular commercial structure of the American cinema makes the repetition of a proven success a major front-office consideration. But we can use the word 'type' or 'category' to assist us in the description of those features of the American cinema and we need not use the word 'genre' at all. My argument will be that we should reserve the title, 'genre', for certain types of films and deny it to others. The Western and gangster types of films certainly constitute genres, while social dramas do not. To refer to social dramas as a genre does no more than collect a number of disparate though loosely related films under a suitable heading, while to say that Westerns constitute a genre implies a number of internal relationships between the various constituents of the genre (the individual films), and a controlling relationship between the film-maker, the genre and the audience.

One notion of genre which has the merit of precision states that 'Genre criticism . . . presupposes an ideal form for the genre.' (Sarris). This approach is unsatisfactory, however, because once the ideal film is constructed in the mind of the critic, the tendency will be to evaluate examples of the genre against the artificial standard of the abstracted film. This approach implies that a director strives to make the archetypal Western or gangster film, or at least that when they deviate from the supposed ideal they are failing in some way. An example of this approach, which preceded Sarris's statement, is contained in André Bazin's article 'The Evolution of the Western' (*Cahiers du Cinéma*, Dec. 1955). Bazin's contention is that with *Stagecoach* (1939 - John Ford) the Western reached a position of classical maturity. Having stated this, Bazin goes on to use the film (and others made in the same period which also display 'classical' qualities) as an index of subsequent productions. Post-war Westerns were to be evaluated according to their relationship to the classical model as exemplified by *Stagecoach*: thus *High Noon* (1952)



The Naked Spur

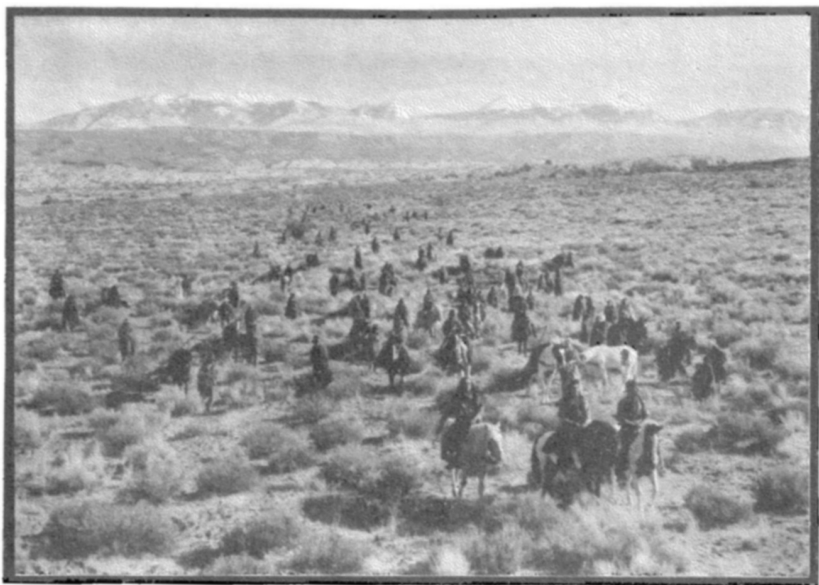
and *Shane* (1953) are referred to as mutations of the genre, while *The Naked Spur* (1953) is praised for 'rediscovering (at an imaginative level) the essence of Westerns as it was contained, on a mythological level, in the Triangle films of long ago, and which has since proved elusive'. Bazin's argument is less crude than Sarris's dictum but it is no more than a refinement and both critical stances lead to an unduly prescriptive form of criticism. There is a danger of such criticism distorting a film by relating it to a standard which only reflects a particular aesthetic preference.

To take an example, a critic could construct an ideal gangster film along the following lines, paying attention only to thematic features: the model theme would involve the rise of a juvenile delinquent from the obscurity of the slums to the leadership of a large bootlegger syndicate, his subsequent decline and death (probably at the hands of his former colleagues). Many gangster films do, in fact, conform to this crude thematic abstract (*Little Caesar*, *Public Enemy*, *Portrait of a Mobster*) but there are numerous films which must be called 'gangster', but which have a very tenuous relationship with the abstract, if any. (*The Big Heat*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Underworld U.S.A.*) Confronted with this thematic diversity the critic would be driven into erecting a number of ideal forms to account for the variety of themes which the gangster film has



The Naked Spur

confronted. Such a multiplication of forms would itself contradict the notion of an ideal form for the genre and hopes for critical precision in this approach would be frustrated. Moreover, this example does not take into account other important features of genre cinema such as iconography. The difficulties involved in integrating the variety of iconographical material into an ideal form would reproduce the problems of the thematic model.



Cheyenne Autumn

Between the looseness of no specific definition (synonymity with 'type') and the rigidity of the Sarrisian position, an acceptable working definition may be arrived at. (Sarris's account of genre forms a minor part of an article putting forward a theory of film history; in no way does he explore the concept of genre in any detail, his commitment being to the notion of '*auteur*'.)

A crucial notion in any definition of genre, must be that the genre film is one which exhibits a relationship with other examples of the genre. This also implies a consciousness of this relationship on the part of the man who makes the film, and on the part of the audience who go to see it. If we consider the Western, the relationship will be in terms of a *complex* of basic material or subject matter, of thematic preoccupations and of iconographical continuity. This complex provides the director of genre films with a basic 'given' to work upon and it also provides an audience with a set of expectations which they will carry to the film. The tripartite division of the complex seems to be the most fruitful way of describing the Western genre, of breaking it into its basic elements.

Basic Material Subject Matter

The Western is concerned basically with the westward drive across the American continent, the pushing westwards of the frontier, the estab-



The Gunfighter

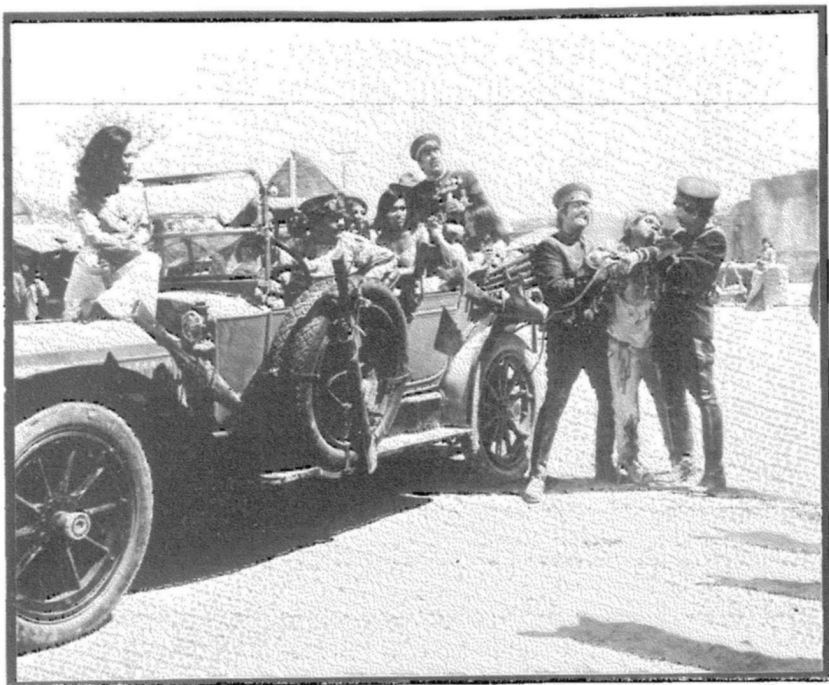
ishment of civilized society in the 'wild west' – the conversion of the desert into the garden.

Thematic Preoccupations

There are far too many themes in the Western genre to be expounded with any degree of succinctness. A number of themes arise directly out of the subject matter such as the epic nature of the opening of the West (*The Covered Wagon*, *The Iron Horse*), the role of specific groups in Western history, the cavalry in *Fort Apache* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, the Indians in *Broken Arrow* and *Cheyenne Autumn*; the developing obsolescence of a frontier style of life has been explored by many Western directors from Henry King's *The Gunfighter* to Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*. Revenge has played a major role in numerous Westerns either as a pivot for other themes (*My Darling Clementine*) or as the major thematic interest (notable in the films of Anthony Mann and in some of the Boetticher Scott cycle).

Iconography

Numerous features of the visual surface of a genre film can be designated as iconographical. For instance, the topography of the West is



The Wild Bunch

often used in a way which correlates with the mood and theme of the film. The bleak weather-washed rocks through which Randolph Scott picks his way at the beginning of many of the Boetticher Westerns evoke the sombre and arid nature of his task (frequently a mission of revenge). In Ford's cavalry films we see frequent shots of the soldiers against the wild, towering buttes of Monument Valley. This image suggests men set against a hostile terrain in a very powerful and immediate way. To refer to the visual features of genre films as iconographical is to acknowledge the many connotations the visual image may acquire through continued and consistent usage.

The schematic description of the three terms of the complex is necessary for a full understanding of what is involved in the Western genre. This account is indicative rather than exhaustive and much of the work of classification remains to be done. Individual Westerns can be related to the complex of themes and iconography which emanates from a basic material source without implying an evaluation. A network can be constructed quite dispassionately; we may, following Bazin, wish to draw attention to a cluster of films made around 1940 which share many characteristics; we may then wish to relate post-war films to this



Cheyenne Autumn

cluster and in doing so we would be elucidating and describing the genre. It is when an evaluative move is built in to this descriptive framework (as in the case of Bazin) that the notion of genre is abused. The individual films will have to be evaluated similarly to other individual works of art, and although this may involve their relationship with other works, the relationship cannot function as the sole judicial criteria. If we approach the Western genre in the descriptive way outlined above we can integrate into the pattern the 'Italian' Western, *Carry On Cowboy*, and the contributions of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry without conferring any particular importance upon them. There are problems in the above account and it remains to be seen whether such a schematic pattern can be drawn from films other than Westerns. The precision with which we can delineate the terms of the Western complex is unlikely to be achieved with other types of films. Even the gangster film is complicated by the emergence of the thriller in the 1940s which clearly is related to the 1930s gangster film but which has elements peculiar to itself. Any schematization would have to take these incongruities into account yet still produce something we could recognize as a pattern, as a genre. The Western complex provides a valuable perspective for our notion of genre.



The Wild Bunch

Teaching Genre

The major teaching problem is the same as the major critical problem *viz.* the arrival at an adequate and meaningful definition of the term and if the network complex account above is acceptable then the task of presenting the Western genre, for instance, can be approached systematically.

Basic Material Subject Matter

It is difficult to decide exactly how much attention should be paid to this area which must remain as background material for film study proper (the study of film as art rather than film as a guide to history, or as evidence for psychological or sociological theses). But the Western genre is concerned with the presentation of the basic material (Western history), however obliquely, in a mythical or symbolic form, and a consideration of what actually happened is necessary for the fullest description of it.

Thematic Preoccupations

Most teachers rely on the BFI extract material and those available from Western films do provide specific illustrations of many of the areas



High Noon

mentioned above. To take a few examples, Ford's idealized picture of the Western community is presented in the extract from *My Darling Clementine*, while his cavalry films are represented by extracts from *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. Post-war developments in the genre are indicated by extracts from Henry King's *The Gunfighter*, Anthony Mann's *The Man From Laramie* and Delmer Daves's anti-Western *Cowboy*. The richness and power of the genre can only be fully appreciated through a consideration of complete films and many teachers have difficulty in including features in their study programmes because of low budgets and awkward timetabling. One answer to this problem would be a BFI Study Unit on the Western where the 'surrounding' extracts could be fully developed in a suitably selected feature. What a consideration of the extracts alone may do is to supply a conceptual structure with which the student can give some order to his experiences of Western films. This is especially important if any sense is to be made of the variety of genre material that may be encountered both in the cinema and on television.

Iconography

The pinpointing of particular imagery in genre can be done by getting hold of appropriate stills for examination in the classroom. A better approach, however, is outlined by Colin McArthur (*Screen Education*



High Noon

July/Aug 1967), in a discussion of the use of slides in film study. The problem is really to show sufficient material to back up the claim that a particular visual effect has an iconographic significance, that the image has a meaning which is independent of the director's use of it.

Conclusion

My aim, in this article, is mainly to attempt a definition of the word 'genre'; but also to show how a fairly systematic approach to the problem of definition can have implications for the teaching of the American cinema (or certain parts of it). Critics and educationalists who talk about a musical genre or a horror genre might like to discuss what they mean by genre in those contexts. The notion of a network or complex of films is essential, if the word 'genre' is to be used successfully, though types of films other than Westerns probably will require different terms for their descriptions.

REFERENCE

1. *The American Cinema*, Dutton, 1968, p. 30.

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The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema

Edward Buscombe

'Genre' is a term much employed in film criticism at the moment, yet there is little agreement on what exactly it means, or whether the term has any use at all. There appear to be three sorts of questions one could profitably ask: first, do genres in the cinema really exist, and if so can they be defined; secondly, what are the functions they fulfill; and thirdly, how do specific genres originate, or what causes them?

It seems sensible to start with a brief review of the history of genre criticism in literature, since it is in this context that certain problems first arise. The notion that there are different kinds of literature, with different techniques and subjects, was first developed by Aristotle; in his *Poetics* he tried to separate out what he called poetry, and we should simply call literature, into a number of categories such as tragedy, epic, lyric, etc. His purpose was to decide what were the particular qualities of each distinctive kind, what each kind could be expected to do and not do. He then tried to establish their relative importance, and after much debate concluded that tragedy was the highest kind of poetry.

During the Renaissance Aristotle's ideas were taken up and erected into a rigid system of rules, so that certain precise styles and forms were prescribed for each kind (the three dramatic unities are the most notorious example). Such codification was extended in the Neo-Classical period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when literature was divided up into more and more categories, or 'species' as they were called, each with its own proper tone, form and subject-matter. As a result of this rather mechanical and dictatorial approach, the theory of literary kinds gradually became discredited. Even the classical Dr Johnson was moved to exclaim: 'There is therefore scarcely any species of writing, of which we can tell what is its essence, and what are its constituents; every new genius produces some new innovation, which, when invented and approved subverts the rules which the practice of foregoing authors had established.'

Under the impact of the Romantic revolt against rules and traditions of all kinds, the idea of literary species, or genres as they later came to be called, suffered greatly. The artist was to be free to write in any manner to which the spirit moved him. It was not until the rise in the late 1930s and early 1940s of a Chicago-based school of criticism known as the Neo-Aristotelians that much attention was paid to the influence on the artist of already existing forms and conventions. The Neo-Aristotelians were consciously reacting against the so-called 'New Criticism', which had expressly repudiated any kind of historical approach to literature. The famous catch-phrase 'a poem is a poem is a poem' sums up their attitude: that a work of literature exists by itself and relies upon no reference to any external reality, whether contemporary or historical.

The Neo-Aristotelians were concerned to rescue literature from such self-imposed isolation, and in attempting to do so they partially resurrected the theory of genres. But they did not always avoid what has often been a source of confusion; Aristotle had spoken of literary kinds in two senses: first as a number of different groups of conventions which had grown up historically and had developed into particular forms such as satire, lyric and tragedy; and secondly as a more fundamental division of literature, into drama, epic and lyric, corresponding to major differences in the relation between artist, subject-matter and audience.

More time in fact was spent in assessing the natures and possibilities of these three modes of literature than in exploring the historical genres. As a result, not much of the work is relevant to the cinema, for these three modes (which correspond approximately to drama, fiction and poetry), appear to be equally present in the cinema. And, on the other hand, such work as has been done on the development of particular genres such as the Gothic novel or Victorian melodrama has not ventured far beyond the mere recording of lists of examples.

Nevertheless, some profit is to be gained from the literary critics, even if only a warning. Many people wish to avoid the whole question of genre because it is held that it will lead to the laying down of rules and regulations which will arbitrarily restrict the freedom of the artist to create what he likes, or the freedom of the critic to talk about anything he wants to. But if the theory of genres in literature has usually been restrictive and normative, it need not necessarily be so. One does not have to set up a Platonic ideal, to which all particular examples try vainly to aspire, nor even to say that the closer any individual film comes to incorporating all the different elements of the definition, the more fully it will be a Western, or gangster picture, or musical. Aristotle's original intention was descriptive, not prescriptive.



The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance

Some positive assistance is afforded by Wellek and Warren in their *Theory of Literature*. They neatly state the crux of the problem:

'The dilemma of genre history is the dilemma of all history: i.e. in order to discover the scheme of reference (in this case, the genre) we must study the history; but we cannot study the history without having in mind some scheme of selection.'

As they recognize, the problem is only another aspect of the wider philosophical problem of universals. With regard to the cinema, we may state it thus: if we want to know what a Western is we must look at certain kinds of films. But how do we know which films to look at until we know what a Western is?

For some people the futility of many of the arguments which arise out of this dilemma (as to whether a film such as, say, *Loneley Are The Brave* is a Western or not) is so obvious that they give up in despair. But having posed the problem in such apparently insoluble terms, Wellek and Warren offer a way out. To begin with, common sense suggests that it is possible to draw up a list of elements which are found in films that, for the purposes of the argument, are called Westerns, and to say that any film which includes one or more of these elements is thereby held to be a Western, though not therefore necessarily identical to other examples of the form. Wellek and Warren go further, however:

'Genre should be conceived, we think, as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific metre or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose – more crudely, subject and audience). The ostensible basis may be one or the other (e.g. "pastoral" and "satire" for the inner form: dipodic verse and Pindaric ode for the outer); but the critical problem will then be to find the *other* dimension, to complete the diagram.'

This idea of both inner and outer form seems essential, for if we require only the former, in terms of subject matter, then our concept will be too loose to be of much value; and if only the latter, then the genre will be ultimately meaningless, since devoid of any content.

What, then, are the cinematic equivalents of, first, outer form? Not, clearly, rhythm. To the extent to which a film can be said to have rhythm, this depends not upon the conventions of the genre within which it is made, but upon the artistic personalities of the director and editor.* Nor does the notion of structure open up many possibilities. It seems extremely difficult to argue that there is any significant similarity between the plots of different Westerns, for example. There are, of course, a number of plot structures which reappear in film after film. There is the one in which a bigoted and usually disciplinarian cavalry officer is narrowly prevented from starting a 'full-scale Indian war'. Or, again, there is the one in which a reformed gunfighter (or ex-marshal) is reluctantly persuaded to accept responsibility for cleaning up the town. But to use such structures as a basis for defining the genre would mean ending up not with one genre called 'the Western', but an almost infinite number of sub-genres. Some may wish to argue that this is the best that can be done. Yet it does seem that these films have something more in common, something which makes the two kinds of story mentioned above part of the same genre.

Since we are dealing with a visual medium we ought surely to look for our defining criteria at what we actually see on the screen. It is immediately apparent that there before our eyes is a whole range of 'outer forms'. There is, first of all, the setting, the chief glory of many of the films. Often it is outdoors, in very particular kinds of country: deserts, mountains, plains, woods. Or, it is indoors, but again, special kinds of indoors: saloons, jails, courtrooms, ranch-houses, hotels, river-boats, brothels – all places frequented by those who live an outdoor and/or wandering kind of life.

Then there are the clothes: wide-brimmed hats, open-neck shirts with scarves, tight jeans (which have got steadily tighter as the years have gone by), sometimes worn with leather chaps and almost always with

* Except, perhaps, for the rapid montage sequences of many gangster films.

spurs and high-heeled boots; or, alternatively, army uniforms, or the wide, but carefully distinguished, variety of Indian costume. There are also certain clothes for specialist occupations: boot-lace ties for gamblers, black gloves for psychopathic hired guns; a man who wears a watch-chain is often a judge, and a black hat can denote a preacher; a bowler, a newspaperman. For women there are usually only two sorts of clothes: wide, full skirts and tight bodices, or, the more tomboyish jeans and shirt. (There is a third costume usually reserved for the Mexican girl or prostitute – often synonymous – in which the bodice is looser and the neckline appreciably lower.)

Thirdly, there are the various tools of the trade, principally weapons, and of these, principally guns. They are usually specifically identified: Colt 45s, Winchester and Springfield rifles, shotguns for certain situations (such as robbing banks or facing a numerically superior enemy) and in Westerns of an earlier period, single-shot, muzzle-loading muskets. Such care in the choice of weapons is not mere pedantry, nor dictated purely by considerations of historical accuracy, for an incredible variety of arms were in use. The weapons employed in the films are there for largely stylistic reasons; consider, for example, the significant difference in the style of movement required to cock a Winchester and a Lee-Enfield .303. Other weapons have their place: knives, often the murderous-looking Bowie type, whips (used by women or bullies), sometimes cannon for the military and assorted Indian hardware, notably the bow and arrow. Again, there are specialist weapons. The man who wears a boot-lace tie should be watched carefully in case he produces a Derringer.

Next in importance as tools come horses, also used in formally differentiated ways. Indians ride bare-backed or with only a blanket, a sign perhaps of their closeness to the animal world. White and black horses have frequently a symbolic function, and if a woman does not ride side-saddle she is no lady, though not always the worse for that. Doctors and judges ride in a buggy, unless, like Doc Holliday, they have ceased to practise. We know, too, what kind of people travel in stage-coaches: in descending order of their entitlement to respect, women, gamblers, corset-salesmen and Easterners.

Fourthly, there is a large group of miscellaneous physical objects which recur and thereby take on a formal function. Trains are invariably of the same kind: cow-catcher in front of the engine, carriages with a railed open platform at the back (useful for fights) and seats either side of a central aisle. Mines, general stores and forts also feature largely, representing the corruption of money, the virtue of honest industry, and an oasis of strength in a hostile land. Indians, too, in spite of the

more liberal attitudes of the last few years, are still primarily important not as people in their own right but as part of the setting.

All these things operate as formal elements. That is to say, the films are not 'about' them any more than a sonnet is about fourteen lines in a certain metre. (*Winchester 73* is not about the gun, which is a mere connecting device to hold the story together. The film, like all films, is about people.) Obviously the formal structure is looser than that of a sonnet; not all the elements need be present. But if we say that a Western is a film which includes at least one of them (and of course the list is by no means exhaustive), then we are saying something both intelligible and useful. The visual conventions provide a framework within which the story can be told.

But what is more important is that they also *affect* what kind of story it will be. Just as the nature of the sonnet makes it more likely you will be successful in writing a love poem of a very personal kind rather than something else, and has so grown up as a genre with both outer and inner form, so too what kind of film a Western is, is largely determined by the nature of its conventions. One can put this more forcefully in a negative way: it is unlikely you will produce a good poem on a large scale historical theme such as the Trojan War if you first choose the sonnet form. So, too, if you are going to make a Western you will tend not to consider certain themes or subjects (unless, as in *High Noon*) you are consciously trying to adapt the form to your purpose in an arbitrary way).

In trying to be more specific here, one gets inevitably on to dangerous ground, for unless one has seen all the Westerns ever made (or, to be absolutely logical, all the Westerns that ever could be made) there cannot be any certainty that generalizations will hold. Since the object is to stimulate discussion, not end it, however, a start can be made by saying that because of the physical setting a Western is likely to deal successfully with stories about the opposition between man and nature, and the establishment of civilization. As Jim Kitses points out in his book *Horizons West*, such oppositions are seen from two points of view: for nature, or for civilization. If, on the other hand, you want to deal with the sense of fear, isolation and excitement engendered by great cities, you won't do it very well within the framework of the Western.

This much, perhaps, is obvious. But it is possible to go further. The men in Westerns wear clothes that are aggressively masculine, sexy in a virile sort of way.* This in its turn determines the character of the hero – taciturn, tough, uncomplicated, self-sufficient. It is surely no accident that the most famous Western heroes are not, by conventional

* As if to underline this, the gambler, whose clothes are flashier, is invariably a ladies' man.

standards, good-looking. John Wayne, Randolph Scott, James Stewart, Gary Cooper, Kirk Douglas, all have their attractions, but they are not, like Cary Grant, at home in a drawing-room. Likewise, the clothes of the women determine that they will be either very feminine or very masculine. (Part of the interest comes from feminine clothes hiding a masculine character – Angie Dickinson in *Rio Bravo* – or vice versa, as with characters like Calamity Jane, who usually turn out to be pining for a home and children.)

But either way, because the men are so aggressively masculine and lead wandering lives and the women are forced either to stay at home or become the equivalents of men, few Westerns have a strong love interest. The formal elements of the genre make it hard to deal with subjects that presuppose in the characters an interest in, and a time for, the heart's affections.

It's likely, also, that given the arsenal of weapons on view in the films violence will play a crucial part in the stories. This is not to say that there could not be pacifist Westerns, though they are significantly less common than pacifist war films, because the kind of weapons used makes the violence less immediate and unpleasant. But it is hard to think of a Western in which there is at least no threat of violence. Thus the world of the West is very different from that of a Henry James novel, where no hand is ever raised in anger. Because the guns are there as part of the formal structure, there will be, characteristically, a dilemma which either can only be resolved by violence, or in which the violence would be a solution, though a wrong one. The characters will be of a kind whose virtue resides not so much in subtlety of intellect, or sensitivity, or imagination, as in their willingness and ability to stand up for themselves, to be in some sense, not necessarily physical, strong.

One could go on. But it might already be objected that it is the subject matter that determines the outer form, not the other way round, that the things a director wants to say will decide the form he uses. Not enough is known about how most Westerns were conceived in the minds of directors and writers to say whether this is the actual process of creation. One may be forgiven for suspecting, however, that the worst way to make a Western is to think of a theme and *then* try to transpose it into Western form.

If one looks at a cinematic genre in this way, as being composed of an outer form consisting of a certain number of visual conventions that are, in a sense, arbitrary (in the same way that a tragedy has five acts) then certain problems are on the way to being solved. First, we are not bound to make any very close connexions between the Western genre and historical reality. Of course there *are* connexions. But too many

discussions of these problems fall down over this point because it is usually assumed that the relationship must be a direct one; that since in fact there was a West, Westerns must be essentially concerned with it. Kitses, for instance, states that 'The basic convention of the genre is that films in Western guise are about America's past.' This is simply not true of many of the films, including several of the ones he discusses, for only Peckinpah of his three directors is at all preoccupied with historical themes. In some of his films Mann includes such material, though that is not where the central interest lies; and Boetticher appears quite oblivious to any such considerations. To be fair, Kitses is aware of other elements in the genre. On pp. 24-5 he summarizes what he calls 'interrelated aspects of the genre', under the headings of 'history', 'themes', 'archetypes', and 'icons' (which are equivalent to what I have called visual conventions). But he fails to show in what their interrelation consists; nor, ultimately, does this first chapter have much to do with his discussion of particular directors, and for the reason I have suggested, that history, to which Kitses devotes most of his attention, is a relatively unimportant part of many Westerns.

There are several reasons why it is necessary to resist the temptation to talk about Westerns largely in terms of history. First, one usually ends up by talking about Ford, who is, clearly, more concerned with it than most. But Ford is not the Western. Secondly, if this is what Westerns chiefly present, it is hard to see why half the world's population should spend its time watching them. Thirdly, and most seriously, to define Westerns as films about a certain period of America's past is to misunderstand the nature and meaning of genres, and how they work.

Before going on to deal with this, however, two more points should be made. Although the Western seems to me the most important of the genres, the one in which the largest body of good work has been done, there are obviously others. The same approach could be applied to them; namely, to inquire into the outer form, the visual and other conventions and to see whether there is the same relation between form and content, whether it could be shown that the subject-matter dealt with is determined by a series of formal and given patterns. The gangster movie* is an obvious subject of inquiry, though one problem is that it shades off into the thriller, so that at one end of the spectrum we have, say, *White Heat* and at the other Hitchcock. Musicals, too, would repay attention. Nor need visual elements be the only defining ones, for film is not only a visual art. For example, it is (or used to be) understood that in Hollywood romantic comedies people do not sleep together unless they are married. Clearly this *is* a convention – it never was actually true. And it cannot be explained merely by referring to the Hayes Code, for that

* See Colin McArthur's BFI Seminar paper, 'Genre and Iconography'.

would make it simply a restriction. Although it does limit the kind of subject that can be dealt with, in the same way that it does in the Victorian novel, on the other hand a lot of mileage can be got out of it. The famous scene in *It Happened One Night* where Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert share a room together uses the convention as the basis of its humour. All the same, the major defining characteristics of genres will be visual: guns, cars, clothes in the gangster, clothes and dancing in the musical (apart from the music, of course!), castles, coffins and teeth in horror movies.

The second point is that while it is possible to talk of themes and archetypes in genres, as Jim Kitses does in his book, it doesn't in the end help very much. He cites archetypes such as 'the journey and the quest, the ceremonies of love and marriage, food and drink, the rhythms of waking and sleeping, life and death.' Not only do these appear in other genres besides the Western; they exist in films which can scarcely be classified into any genres, and what is more, they occur in other forms of art besides the cinema. What we need is a way of looking at a genre which can make clear what is distinctive about it and how its outer and inner forms relate.

But what functions does genre perform? Or, in other words, why bother to talk about it at all? Can't we get along just as well with our present director-oriented theories, while admitting that some films are like others? The trouble is that our present theories are so extreme. They assume that the auteur (who need not necessarily be the director, of course) is personally responsible for everything that appears in the film – or that *someone* is responsible, if only a heavy-handed producer. This form of over-compensation, a reaction to the critical dark ages when American cinema was dismissed as repetitive rubbish, mass-produced to a formula (unfortunately all too successful) in the factories of Hollywood, has led to a situation in which American films are held to be wholly the expressions of the artistic personalities of their highly original creators.

There may well be several reasons for this, apart from the swing of the pendulum. There is a kind of critical snobbery which assumes that you cannot really appreciate a film unless you have seen all its director's other films, and which leads to the more bizarre forms of *auteur*-hunting.* For if an individual film is good, then it must have an *auteur* behind it, and if he is an *auteur*, it follows that his other works will be good – or at least interesting. And yet there are films which are totally successful and which derive their power from the traditions of a genre rather than from any distinctive directorial contribution. *Casablanca* is such a one,

* I use the term loosely, to mean the artist awarded credit for a film's succession; the distinction between *auteur* and *metteur-en-scène* has no importance here.

as Andrew Sarris recognizes in 'The American Cinema'. It doesn't help much to have seen other Curtiz films, but one's enjoyment is enormously enriched by having seen Humphrey Bogart and the rest in other films of the period. It may be objected that strictly speaking this has nothing to do with genre, since the qualities which actors can bring to a film cut across genres. Yet is it not a fact that Bogart's battered face instantly communicates a blend of cynicism and honesty, weariness and generosity, that is genuinely part of a tradition of the American *film noir*? What he represents in the film owes little to Michael Curtiz, much to the other films he played in.

But the chief justification of the genre is not that it allows merely competent directors to produce good films (though one is grateful enough for that). Rather, it is that it allows good directors to be better. And the main reason why this has not been more generally recognized is that the *auteur* theory is not very well equipped to deal with popular art. Even in its less extreme forms it cannot really make room for the contribution of the tradition in which a film was made. Thus it is not only that, in order to appreciate *Casablanca*, we must be prepared to accept Curtiz as an *auteur* (which is what Higham and Greenberg request us to do in *Hollywood in the Forties* (p. 19): when we are faced with a genuinely distinctive artist he is so often considered apart from the genre background he works in. Robin Wood's book on Hitchcock is an excellent piece of criticism. But in his discussion of *Psycho* he says nothing of the film's obvious relation to the horror genre. Surely one's sense of fear depends at least in part on our built-in response to certain stock symbols which Hitchcock employs. People rarely take Hitchcock seriously when he talks about his pictures; yet at the head of the section on *Psycho* Robin Wood has this quotation: 'The process through which we take the audience [is it not significant that he so often says "we", not "I"?] you see, it's rather like taking them through the haunted house at the fairground . . . ' The house itself, with its vague suggestion of Victorian Gothic, is straight out of any number of horror films: and when at the end Vera Miles goes down towards the cellar, we are terrified not just because we have heard Norman say he is taking his mother down there (we don't anyway know yet that his mother is a corpse, though of course we suspect all is not well); our certainty that something unpleasant will be found comes from our knowledge that nasty things do come out of cellars in this kind of film. This is not to deny Wood's ascription of Freudian overtones to the cellar; but the trouble with Freudian overtones is that you aren't supposed to be aware of them. It seems more likely that our conscious reaction to the scene owes more to our having assimilated them through an exposure to the tradition of the genre.

Most people see films this way. No one would suggest that we must

be bound by the aesthetic criteria of the man in the street. Yet anyone who is at all concerned with education must be worried at the distance between much of the criticism now written and the way the average audience reacts to a film. For them it is not a new Hawks or Ford or a new Peckinpah; it is a new Western. And to sympathize with this view is not to deny the claims of these directors to be artists. Popular art does not condemn its creators to a subsidiary role. Instead it emphasizes the relation between the artist and his material, on the one hand, and the material and the audience on the other. The artist brings to the genre his own concerns, technique and capacities – in the widest sense his style – but receives from the genre a formal pattern which directs and disciplines his work. In a sense this imposes limitations, as I have suggested. Certain themes and treatments are, if not ruled out, unlikely to be successful if they work too hard against the genre. But the benefits are considerable. Constant exposure to a previous succession of films have led the audience to recognize certain formal elements as charged with an accretion of meaning. Some of these I have tried to isolate, and in some cases their meaning has been suggested. Some critics like to refer to them as ‘icons’.

All too often, however, discussion has ceased there. But it is vital to see how icons relate to the cinema in general, but to genres in particular, and how in the popular cinema they may be reconciled to our natural desire to see films as the expression of an artistic personality.

This can best be done through the notion that a genre film depends on a combination of novelty and familiarity. The conventions of the genre are known and recognized by the audience, and such recognition is in itself a pleasure. Popular art, in fact, has always depended on this; one might argue that the modern idea of novelty (or ‘originality’) as a major, even *the* major, quality to be desired in a work of art dates from the Romantic period. And as Raymond Williams shows in *Culture and Society*, it is during this period that art began to move away from its contact with a large, roughly homogeneous audience. We have there the beginnings of the present-day division between ‘mass’ and ‘highbrow’ culture. All too easily this originality degenerates into eccentricity and communication is sacrificed in the interests of self-expression. It is one of the chief merits of the American cinema that this has, on the whole, not yet happened; and because this is so the popular cinema (which is almost, though not quite, synonymous with the American cinema) offers one of the richest sources of material for those teaching Liberal Studies to the culturally unsophisticated. Those who are unconvinced by this might wish to argue that the opposite of eccentricity is the cliché. It is true that if a director slavishly copies the conventions rather than uses them, then we get a film which is just what Hollywood

is so often, even now, held to have produced exclusively: a thoroughly predictable string of stock situations and images. However, this article is not primarily intended as propaganda for Hollywood. That battle, if not won, is at least being fought by increasing numbers of people, on ever widening fronts. Rather, the intention is to argue that it is a mistake to base the argument for popular cinema exclusively on a case for the *auteur*.

One of the best examples of the way in which genre actually works is in Peckinpah's *Guns in the Afternoon*. Knowing the period and location, we expect at the beginning to find a familiar Western town. In fact, the first few minutes of the film brilliantly disturb our expectations. As the camera roves around the town we discover a policeman in uniform, a car, a camel, and Randolph Scott dressed up as Buffalo Bill. Each of these images performs a function. The figure of the policeman conveys that the law has become institutionalized; the rough and ready frontier days are over. The car suggests, as in *The Wild Bunch*, that the West is no longer isolated from modern technology and its implications. Significantly, the camel is racing against a horse; such a grotesque juxtaposition is painful. A horse in a Western is not just an animal, but a symbol of dignity, grace and power. These qualities are mocked by it competing with a camel; and to add insult to injury, the camel wins.

Randolph Scott is not just an actor. It is enough to have seen two or three of his films to know that he represents a quiet, cheerful kind of integrity. Peckinpah uses this screen image by having him play against it all through the film; but the initial shock of seeing him in a wig, running a crooked booth at the fair, does more than upset our expectations about his role in the film. It calls into question our whole attitude to the heroes of Western legend. Scott dressed up as Buffalo Bill is an image that relies not only on Scott's screen personality, but also on the audience's stock response to Buffalo Bill, for he too is debased by this grotesque impersonation. This, Peckinpah is saying, is the state that things have come to, that heroes are exploited for money.

Clearly, then, although Peckinpah is working against the conventions, he could not do this unless he and the audience had a tradition in common. He needs the outer form, though in many ways he is making an anti-Western. What is especially interesting is the relation between this and the inner form. Here I am obliged to take issue again with Jim Kitses. He believes that Peckinpah's films are essentially about a search for personal identity. While not wishing to deny that some such concern may be traced in the pictures, one must protest that this rather tends to ignore the most obvious fact about them, that they are Westerns. Personal identity can be sought for anywhere, anytime. But the essential theme of *Guns in the Afternoon* is one that, while it could be put into

other forms, is ideally suited to the one chosen. The film describes the situation of men who have outlived their time. Used to a world where issues were decided simply, on a test of strength, they now find this way of life threatened by complications and developments they do not understand. Since they cannot, or will not, adapt, all that remains to them is a tragic and bitter heroism.

The cluster of images and conventions which we call the Western genre is used by Peckinpah to define and embody this situation, in such a way that we know what the West was, and what it has become. The first is communicated through images which are familiar, the second through those which are strange. And together they condition his subject matter. Most obviously, because the film is a Western, the theme is worked out in terms of violent action. If it were a musical, the theme might be similar in some ways, but because the conventions would be different, it would probably not involve violence (or if it did the violence might well be highly stylized, and so quite different in effect). And if it were a gangster picture, it seems unlikely that the effect of the film's ending, its beautifully elegiac background of autumn leaves, would be reproduced, suggesting as it does that the dead Judd is at one with nature, that nature which seems at the beginning of the film to have been overtaken by 'civilization'.

Much of what has been said has been expressed in other ways by recent writers, occasionally more esoterically. What needs to be done now is that our increasing understanding of how important semiology is should be put to work, to explore the precise relation between the artist and his given material, in order to explain our intuitive feeling that a genre is not a mere collection of dead images waiting for a director to animate it, but a tradition with a life of its own. We return to the third question at the beginning of this article. Genres predate great directors. The Western was going along happily under its own steam well before John Ford, or even James Cruze, came upon it. We need much more work on the early history of these various forms if we are to fully comprehend their strange power, and how exactly they grew rich enough to attract the talents they did. Lastly, the question of the relation between the Western and history, which I have argued is by no means simple, and not always central, can only be answered with certainty when we know how the form began. It's usually assumed that it sprang, fully armed, from pulp fiction, and yet so much of it is visual that it is hard to believe this is quite true. And if the Western originates in history and is a response to it, what about the musical? Or the horror film? Can we possibly evolve a theory to fit them all?

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Film in the Humanities Curriculum Project

1. Theory

Jim Hillier and Andrew McTaggart

The following article, in a slightly different form, was presented as a paper at the 'Youth and Film' Conference, Mannheim, October 1969.

This is a brief account of the use of film in a particular experimental research project – the Humanities Curriculum Project. It is not an approach to 'film teaching' but a 'use of film' in teaching. It should be stressed that this approach is in no way intended as a rival to, or a substitute for, the study of film and television as a subject in its own right. Nevertheless, it may be that the kind of film material normally associated with 'film teaching' will find its way into many schools more readily either in conjunction with other subjects such as English or Fine Arts, or, as here, in multi-media approaches which cross over subject boundaries.

Basically the project outlined here arose out of the prospect of the raising of the minimum school leaving age in Britain from 15 to 16 years. It was felt that new teaching strategies were called for.

The context for this work had already been set:

'To set a class to study a carefully defined problem in human conduct and human relations into which boys and girls can project themselves and work out the various implications of different courses of action – this is realistic teaching'.

(from the Newsom Report)

'The problem is to give every man some access to a complex cultural inheritance, some hold on his personal life and on his relationships with the various communities to which he belongs, some extension of his understanding of, and sensitivity towards, other human beings. The aim is to forward understanding, discrimination and judgement in the human field – it will involve reliable factual knowledge, where

this is appropriate, direct experience, imaginative experience, some appreciation of the dilemmas of the human condition, of the rough-hewn nature of many of our institutions, and some rational thought about them.'

(from Schools Council's Working Paper No. 2, on the raising of the school leaving age).

With this background, the Humanities Curriculum Project was set up in 1967 in order to research into the problems that this approach raises for teachers. Its brief was:

'to offer to schools and to teachers such stimulus, support and materials as may be appropriate to the mounting, as an element in general education, of enquiry-based courses, which cross the subject boundaries between English, history, geography, religious studies and social studies.

It stated that:

'The claim of the humanities in the curriculum rests upon the assertion that their study enhances understanding and hence judgement in those areas of practical living which involve complex considerations of empirical data, values and cultural traditions.'

The Project, financed by the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation, will run until 1972. The commercial publication of materials and recommendations will continue through 1970-72 but during this time the Project team will be concerned primarily with evaluation. The themes or topics chosen for experiment are War, Education, the Family, Relations Between the Sexes, Living in Cities, Poverty, Work and Leisure, Law and Order, Race Relations – all, in one way or another, controversial areas of universal human concern. Film is only one element in the Project's approach. Before talking about the use of film in particular, it is necessary to explain something of the theory and practice of the approach as a whole. (For a more detailed explanation see 'Open Minded Teaching' by Lawrence Stenhouse, director of the Project, in *New Society*, 24 July 1969, from which many of the general points about Project theory are condensed.)

By definition a controversial issue divides society – including pupils, parents and teachers. In a democracy we do not expect everyone to hold the same views. We value a dialogue between informed views. (In any case teachers are not, in fact, free to express their moral positions in schools, unless those positions fall within generally accepted norms.) If different teachers, pupils and parents have views ranging over the whole spectrum of opinion, teaching should be based on open but disciplined discussion rather than on formal instruction. The Project

is committed to responsibility (the acceptance of one's own accountability) rather than to authority (depending for justification on others).

Teaching must permit and protect divergence and maintain respect for individual opinions. The teacher cannot be an 'expert', cannot have the 'right answers', cannot solve by authority all issues about values arising in discussion. But discussion must be disciplined and the teacher must understand his purely *procedural* authority – as the 'chairman' of the discussion – in the classroom. The Project aims at a form of discussion in which the teacher should be a neutral and impartial chairman and a resource consultant. He should help a discussion group to find its own way to an understanding of the issues at stake and should try to moderate social group pressures on students to conform. 'Neutrality' means that the teacher does not propagate his own view and is prepared to see the students treat all views according to consistent critical principles. 'Impartiality' means that in normal circumstances all students within the discussion should be treated alike.

To teach controversial matters well a teacher must believe the issues to be important, implying that he has deep commitments of his own. He is not teaching neutrality so much as the nature of responsible commitment. If education is to move away from the idea of custodial containment to the desire to help students to cope with life after they leave school, it must at some time wean them from dependence on teachers' authority.

Neutrality and impartiality is not only a professional ethic in controversial areas; it is also important in what happens in the classroom. The chairman of a discussion can breach his neutrality in a number of ways. By responding more favourably to some student contributions than others he may endorse a particular view, just as he may if he asks questions in a leading way. The danger is that a chairman-teacher may destroy a discussion by redirecting it from a genuine attempt to understand the issue in question into a guessing game about what is in the teacher's mind (and this is merely instruction in disguise). The purpose of neutrality is to put the responsibility for gaining understanding on the pupils.

If the teacher maintains neutrality, the source of information or 'evidence' for discussion must come from somewhere other than himself. To avoid the typical situation in which discussion becomes an exchange of prejudices and opinions, the Project assembles, supplies and recommends materials for discussion. These materials include printed matter (extracts from novels and plays, poems, newspaper articles, leaflets, letters, material from books on history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, etc.) taped materials (drama, songs, interviews), photographs and films. The essential points about these materials are:

1. they are from existing sources, not specially manufactured;
2. they are designed to represent a range of different views on as many issues as possible;
3. they cover both fact and fiction, data and experience;
4. they are not intended to be definitive – schools are expected to add to them;
5. they are supplied in multiple, loose copies so that each student can have in front of him a copy of the evidence under discussion.

How is this sort of evidence used in discussion? The Project's research in its 36 experimental schools has shown that students will tend initially to look to a chairman for authority, assume he knows the answers and try to guess what he wants them to say. They will see the 'evidence' as material from which they are expected to make a clear-cut case. They will expect that evidence produced is designed to foster consensus. They will often be sceptical and make the least of conflicting evidence. At first they often regard documentation as evidence only about facts or events. It takes time for them to understand that fiction or poetry can be evidence for a mood or emotion and that a piece of didactic prose can be simply evidence for the *existence* of a point of view rather than *proof* that it is right. Skill and judgement in these areas need experience before they can be developed. While the teacher-chairman risks harming the discussion if he asks questions to which he thinks he knows the answers, he can point out ambiguities which he himself cannot resolve. He can help the students to interpret evidence. He can encourage pupils to clarify their arguments. By introducing new pieces of evidence he can either help students to see what may not be clear in another piece or discourage easy consensus. By refusing to break silences in discussion himself, he can encourage the students to take responsibility for their own discussion. By his sensitivity to student discussion he can suggest and stimulate outcomes, or follow-up work, which may further extend the understanding gained in discussion.

The Project does not think, nor does its research show, that the change of role required by this kind of teaching is easily achieved. It needs some retraining, dedication and painful experience but if successful it can bring considerable rewards in terms of the intellectual level of work achieved. The method is not intended as a way of teaching other classroom subjects but, as Lawrence Stenhouse says, it 'radically changes teacher-pupil relationships and has profound implications for the authority structure of the school'.

Film is only one kind of material among others. As with the printed material the films range from newsreel and documentary to fiction, from ten minute extracts or short films to feature length works. Feature length fiction films are regarded as especially important since they offer

complete and complex experiences, where so many other materials are in extract form. The films are selected for their relevance to a number of basic issues and their representation of different attitudes. Thus, a selection of films on war may include films in which war is accepted as necessary or even glorified as well as films which are anti-war in intent. It may include documentary or newsreel films made about actual wars as well as fictionalized personal experiences of war. In the context of an inquiry into a particular theme, film may be used in a number of ways:

1. to begin the inquiry, by raising issues which can then be explored either through the film or through reference to other materials;
2. to be introduced at a particular stage of an inquiry, to provide material for the discussion of a particular issue (though it should be noted that problems of booking make this very integral use of film difficult);
3. to sum up, by showing a film, possibly a complete feature film, at the end of an inquiry to help draw together or synthesize all the various pieces of evidence discussed and issues raised.

Documentary and fiction film serve different purposes. Documentary film is similar to written journalism, history or sociology. There is a core of fact that the film wishes to communicate. Documentary films about famine, courtship habits or education can provide factual information which is useful to the inquiry being undertaken. Beyond the level of raw evidence there are often considerations of the attitudes taken by the film, expressed in the tone of its commentary or the particular choice of its images. Such considerations are especially important when dealing with propaganda documentary. Interesting work has been done with newsreels which have been shown with and without commentary to discuss the differences of effect. In fiction film there is no 'raw factual evidence' in the same way. Usually the fiction film deals with personal emotions and experiences. To establish what such films wish to communicate, discussion must take account of artistic intention and realization.

For those concerned with the value of teaching film as a subject valid in itself, these methods may seem to present certain disadvantages or dangers. Film is used in conjunction with other kinds of evidence and students will normally see a film while in the process of discussing particular issues. They will therefore bring to a film certain concerns which will influence what they see in it, stressing some aspects rather than others. It is true that we all bring personal concerns to the films we watch at any time, but the process may be extreme in this kind of teaching. It is in the logic of the Project that the teacher is not allowed to ask leading questions about the material. He cannot have an agenda of

points about the film which he wants his students to notice and appreciate. It will therefore happen that aspects of a film which a 'film teacher' would regard as important may not be explored. It should be noted also that in this kind of work teachers are not specialists in the usual sense, since they are expected to handle material from disciplines in which they have not been specially trained. This thematic use of film also has an inhibiting effect. Films which cannot be easily placed within a social theme as well as films which are formally rich or intensely personal can tend to be excluded.

However, these disadvantages seem minor when compared with the possibilities of this approach. Film is used in conjunction with other media but on an equal footing with them. Just as material from other media may help students to understand films, so films may throw light upon these other kinds of material, thus establishing the validity and importance of film both as a channel of information and as a part of our cultural environment. Film is not used merely as a stimulus for the discussion of general issues. The Project aims at the understanding of issues but finally these issues can only be understood by close examination and elucidation of particular manifestations of them. If a film raises a general issue like the ethics of resistance in wartime, then discussion of this issue must be on the basis of the evidence supplied in the film – how does it raise the issue? what does it say about it? These questions can only be answered by constant reference back in discussion to what happens in the film, to its organization and texture, its choice of images, its use of sound and music, and so on. This procedure may be the same as that adopted in teaching film as a subject in its own right but there is a difference in motivation. Here the motivation is not primarily aesthetic but thematic, establishing the principle that, apart from anything else, film is concerned with the lives we lead and the world in which we live.

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Film in the Humanities Curriculum Project

2. Practical

Richard Exton

This account of practical experience in one of the Project's experimental schools is in no way intended as a model nor as special, typical or representative. The author would be the first to admit that both he and his groups are still at an early stage in the development of this work. He has yet to explore fully the potential of fictional material, for example. The account is presented here simply as the kind of experience on which the Project's evaluation and research are based. — J. H., A. McT.

Bishop Thomas Grant School is a co-educational Roman Catholic comprehensive in a residential area of South London but drawing on a much larger area for its intake. It has been one of the experimental schools in the Humanities Curriculum Project, last year having a group of twenty pupils in each of the fourth and fifth years (14–15 year olds and 15–16 year olds), and this year having two complete classes comprising 55 pupils split into four groups in the fourth year as well as last year's fourth-year group continuing. In addition, it has been using the Project method and resources in the Sixth Form (16–18 year olds) though this is, strictly, outside the terms of the HCP experiment.

A number of problems arose when working with film, some of them specific to the school, but others of a more general nature. The 55 fourth formers working on the Humanities this year are separated into four groups each with its own room; all are timetabled together and when films are shown they are normally shown to all four groups together. This involves quite elaborate organization on occasions as only one room – a science lecture room – is suitable for the projection of a film to more than 50 people. If the film lasts more than an hour, two timetable changes have to be made: if the film lasts ten minutes, 55 children are stuck in a room unsuitable for Humanities discussion or follow-up work, except writing, for the remainder of the hour. On the other hand, film has an immediate appeal which can help to overcome the physical difficulties.

The other major problem is one which we see no immediate way of overcoming, namely the need to book films a long time in advance, and then finding them not directly appropriate on the date of showing. Nor

is it always possible to forecast with certainty when an inquiry will end and another one begin. In Bishop Thomas Grant this led to our seeing *Night and Fog* three weeks after we had begun inquiring into 'The Family'. However the films have never been valueless.

Classroom Experience One

Protest for Peace

Group: Last year's Fourth Form group. It was the third of seven English sets.

Number: Seven girls and fourteen boys.

Ability: Considered to be just above the GCE/CSE borderline for English.

Time spent on Humanities: 5 × 45 minute periods, three single and one double. Three of the periods were taken from their normal five periods of English, and the remainder took the place of Games.

Last year we began an inquiry into 'War and Society' by looking particularly at *Protest*, and it seemed appropriate to start with a film. We knew that a demonstration against the war in Vietnam had been planned for October and so *Protest for Peace* seemed especially suitable. The film is a short compilation of three newsreels made by Pathé in association with the HCP team, and shows different forms of protest, from Ban the Bomb marches and sit-downs (1961) to American anti-Vietnam War marches and demonstrations (1966-7) and the violent Grosvenor Square anti-Vietnam War demonstration (March 1968). The group saw the film in their normal discussion room, and this proved useful because we were then able to show the film again in the middle of the ensuing discussion without any real difficulty.

No introduction was given to the film apart from the title. After the group had seen the film I began the discussion by asking them if they had any comment to make on the film as a whole, and some discussion ensued regarding the trend to violence shown in the newsreels, but soon the discussion centred on the final part of the film – the sequences concerning the Grosvenor Square demonstration – and the question of who was to blame for the violence. Gradually the discussion moved to the reliability of film as evidence, bearing in mind the remarks of the commentator. The group was divided on whether the commentator was right in his judgements – that the police had shown remarkable restraint and that hooligans had set out to turn the demonstration into a violent rather than a peaceful one, and some of the group at this stage questioned whether the whole compilation was biased in trying to show a trend towards violence in the demonstrations.

It seemed advisable to show the film again at this point in the discussion

because it was found that contradictory statements were being made and the children had nothing concrete in front of them to refer back to, unlike written or photographic material, and as the discussion still centred on the question of who kicked whom, a photograph of an incident involving police and demonstrators was introduced as further evidence. Two girls who had in fact been on the demonstration reported that any violence at the time had escaped their notice.

As the discussion about causes of violence seemed exhausted, I asked the group how much they thought the demonstrations achieved and what they set out to achieve, and as additional evidence introduced two newspaper editorials from the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* published the day after the third demonstration shown in the film. A lively discussion followed which again questioned the reliability of eye-witnesses and argued for and against success in demonstrations referring back to the film. As a follow-up activity designed to extend the group's understanding of the feelings of the demonstrators and the police a series of interviews between members of the group playing the role of policemen, demonstrators and newspaper reporters was acted, and for homework they were asked to write a policeman's thoughts as he stood on duty in Grosvenor Square.

Some of the group went to the October demonstration in Grosvenor Square and reported back to the rest of the group making quite interesting comparisons with what they had seen in the film.

Classroom Experience Two

Time of The Locust

Group: This year's Fourth Form.

Number: Nine girls, ten boys.

Ability: Broad range of below-average ability.

Time spent on Humanities: All English and History time: 8 × 1 hour periods each ten-day cycle i.e. two complete afternoons each week.

Problems: Some of the children have difficulties in reading and writing: some are considered 'difficult' by the school.

Time of the Locust is a film about the war in Vietnam made by the American Society of Friends, using newsreel shot by the Japanese, NLF and Saigon Government, which is a deliberate attack on the American involvement in Vietnam. The film arrived in school with a warning that it was unsuitable for children and this put the teachers of the fourth year groups into a dilemma. There was no time to see the film before the lesson was due to begin, so what we did was to show it to the Sixth Form group and merge two of the fourth-year groups so that I could see the film before deciding whether to show it. This was probably a bad thing to do, because the fourth-years' imaginations were

now working, and when they saw the film twenty minutes later they were in no mood to watch it with an open mind. I made things worse by telling them that there was violence in the film which might upset some people. All this possibly destroyed the film as a piece of evidence about the war but did lead to a very interesting discussion afterwards.

During the showing of the film there was a mixed response, ranging from children hiding their heads to some boys cheering as a Vietcong suspect was repeatedly kicked. We showed the film again immediately and this time the response was much quieter and more attention was given to the screen. After the second showing the groups dispersed to separate rooms. I asked each of the children in my group in turn to say in a single word or sentence what he or she felt about the film. Again the response was very varied but reactions seemed not to be correlated with the sex of the child. The main point of discussion turned on whether the torturing and killing on the screen were shocking. Some pupils said that there was no blood and therefore the film was not frightening, some said that Westerns have just as much violence, while others felt the horror more strongly because they knew this was really happening and it was not 'just a film'. Discussion tended to centre on the violence but constant questions about who was fighting whom and why were the Chinese killing each other forced me to give them a brief history of the Vietnam conflict on which I had made notes the previous year. I made it clear that this was evidence. There was no other source of evidence at that time and no other teacher available to give the information when it was asked for. One of the boys, however, after a time produced the Penguin book *Vietnam, Vietnam* which contains photographs of many of the episodes we had seen in the film and this renewed discussion about the rights and wrongs of America's presence in Vietnam. For homework that night the class were asked to write a speech for the Prime Minister saying why he supported the Americans over Vietnam. The interesting thing about the film had been the way it had provoked useful discussion though at the same time raising many questions with this particular group in that it took so much for granted. They were unclear as to the geography, history or politics of the Vietnam War, nor did they know who the Quakers were or what pacifism meant – though we were later able to follow up these particular issues with further evidence from the Humanities material.

Classroom Experience Three

Night and Fog

The same group who saw *Time of the Locust* were also shown *Night and Fog*, a film describing the history of the German labour, concentration and extermination camps, which through a juxtaposition of a black-and-

white past with an Eastmancolour present questions man's ability to remember. Some of the sequences are very disturbing but I wanted to avoid a repetition of our experience with *Time of the Locust*.

In my introduction to the film, I mentioned the film's technique of juxtaposing past and present without going into detail and asked them to question the reason for this. I also stated that some people find the film disturbing. We then showed the film. The group was quiet throughout (perhaps because of the effort of reading subtitles on a very bad print), and as soon as the film ended they were asked to write down whatever they felt about the film or its subject. This, as well as giving them a chance to absorb the content of the film and consider their own feelings, also seemed the ideal way of spending the last twenty minutes of the lesson in the lecture room. The groups then separated for the following lesson.

It ought to be explained that three weeks before the showing of *Night and Fog*, we had stopped doing 'War' and had begun an inquiry into 'The Family'. This may have had beneficial effects on the discussion because 'War' would have had time to settle down in their minds and they could draw on their past discussions and inquiry.

I began the discussion by asking each member of the group, if he would, to read out the things he had written after seeing the film. On the whole these were general statements of disgust or horror, or factual descriptions of things they had seen. The same images recurred constantly – the piles of hair, bodies, heads, etc. The group agreed that the 'message' of the film was: 'Don't forget', but they were not certain about the use of colour. One point which arose and provoked discussion about film as such was that normally in the cinema prisoners in camps are tall and well fed and look like George Segal. A further point introduced was that of who was responsible – we had seen in the film Germans denying at Nuremburg that they were responsible. In order to examine more vividly this issue, we put one of the boys in the group 'on trial'. Under pressure his defence was that 'he had to earn his living somehow' and a vigorous discussion followed. I then suggested that we put one of the girls on trial playing the role of the commandant's wife whom we had seen in the film living a comfortable, civilized life in the camp bungalow. It turned out that almost a third of the group had not noticed this section in the film, and one boy said that he was bored at the beginning of the film: he was waiting for the 'good bits'. Again a lively discussion followed. Throughout all the discussion there was reference back to earlier lessons and particularly to a BBC TV film *Warsaw Ghetto* with which we had started the inquiry. Also comparisons were made with *Time of the Locust*. *Night and Fog*, they felt, was far more horrible because so removed from 'Hollywood' violence and horror.

The three accounts given above all show how film was used in an inquiry into 'War and Society' and it may be that the problems that arose are specific to war. War as such means very little to a great many 14 year olds except as a subject for films – but the films they expect about war are strictly things that will entertain them. This became apparent when we took this year's Fourth Form group to a local cinema to see *Oh, What A Lovely War*. It was clear that their frame of mind was very different from that with which they saw the films in school. There were treks to the toilets and many of them thought the film 'stupid', largely, I suspect, because it was not what they were expecting. However, later on when we had played the record and talked more about World War I quite a few of the children referred back to sequences in the film.

We also showed extracts from *The Long and the Short and the Tall* and from *The Guns of Navarone*. These were interesting in so far as they were the only 'commercial' films that we used, and with both the children merely talked about the story and the issues raised, not about film as a medium as they had with some of the documentaries.

The Sixth Form group were to see *Mourir a Madrid* and so we decided to let the fourth year see it also – but the film was not a success. It was too long and too complicated for them. They were without any historical background and very greatly confused about the conflicting parties. One other film which was interesting in its own way was another of the Pathé compilations, *The People's War*. The quality of the sound on the projector we were using was very bad indeed so we ran the film twice and asked the children to write their own commentary.

When asked where they preferred to see film as part of the Humanities the majority stated a preference for school rather than the cinema – if the conditions were better. There seemed to be far fewer barriers against film than against the written evidence, though here, in turn, there was less resistance than to a text-book because of the personal quality of the Humanities material: each child can hold his own piece of evidence. The images in film seem to make a far greater impact than printed matter but there is the difficulty that film is not easy to refer back to unless there is a very full synopsis available.

We intend to continue using as much film as possible.

THE FILMS

War & Society Part 3: *Protest for Peace*, 11 minutes, £3 for 5 days (minimum hire period) from Associated-British Pathé Ltd.

Time of the Locust, 12 minutes, £1.5.0 from Concord Films Council.

Nuit et Brouillard / *Night and Fog*, 30 minutes £3.10.0 from Contemporary Films Ltd.

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The Festival of the Hungarian Feature Film – Pécs, 1969

Suzanne Budgen

Last year once again the small town of Pécs, in Southern Hungary, was, for a week in October, given over to the Festival of the Hungarian Feature Film, last year's being the fifth in the series.

In common with the Czech film makers, the Hungarians tend to concentrate on normal life and ordinary people, but whereas, in many Czech films, there is to be seen an acceptance of mediocrity, and indeed a cherishing of it as the most common of all human conditions, in most Hungarian films there is, on the contrary, a sense of the heights to which ordinary men and women can rise in response to demanding circumstances. Whereas the Czechs show a rueful acceptance of the unheroic, the Hungarians turn an angry eye upon a society, and upon events, in which a man needs to be a hero in order to remain a man.

One of the conditions of film-making in East Europe is a lack of hard currency, and this has made of it perhaps the last stronghold of the black-and-white film. Colour is much closer to our normal vision, and most colour films aim no higher than a naturalistic faithfulness of representation; it makes fewer demands on the audience than black and white, which is much more abstract, and which encourages, therefore, greater artistic freedom and inventiveness. In the West, most films made in colour are so made purely with an eye to future sales on television and not from any creative compulsion. It is therefore very much to be hoped that the Hungarians will not allow themselves to be trapped into this situation, though the proportion of colour films shown this year was a little disquieting.

A name which has attracted a good deal of attention abroad is that of Sándor Sára, who photographed István Gaál's *The Current*, István Szabós *Father*, and Ferenc Kósa's *Ten Thousand Sins*. The quality of the images in these films, especially the Kósa and the Gaál, was so outstanding that the impression grew of a very remarkable man behind the camera, and one of the excitements of the Festival was Sára's first

venture in direction, a full-length feature called *The Uptthrown Stone* (*Feldobott Kő*). The fact that a man can take marvellous pictures is no guarantee that he can make a good film, and curiosity was high. So was expectation and it says a great deal for the quality of the film that this expectation was far exceeded. This, for many of us, was the revelation of the festival. The film, blessedly in black and white, shows the same vision which had appeared through the work of other directors, but here, of course, in the freedom of his own film, Sára is able to pursue a personal and unified aim. This he does wholly without self-indulgence. In one sequence, for instance, we see a small gipsy child reciting a poem she has learned, in the context, a sophisticated and rare achievement. She is surrounded by old gipsy faces, which Sára shows in close-up, not because they are gipsies or because they are old, but because there dawns in them the light of understanding and rational hope. With the child's delighted pride in her own performance, the halting recitation is then seen to be an earnest of hope for the future, of deliverance from darkness, and of the gipsies' claim to the common inheritance of their country. Part of the strength of the film comes from Sára's command of long-shot, with an apparently motionless countryside gradually seen to be alive with tiny movements, which not only acts as a formal counterpoint to the many close-ups, but, in so personal a film, provides a necessary distance and measure.

The film is, to a considerable extent, autobiographical, and reflects Sára's abiding concern with injustice and cruelty, as well as an intuitive understanding of the medium. It is a unified embodiment of vision, intellectual judgement, and feeling, and its winning of the main prize of the Festival was felt to be both a salute to a completed achievement and a recognition of a newly acknowledged power for the future.

There were a number of new ventures, some more successful than others. *The Windows of Time* (*Az Idő Ablakai*), by Tamás Fejér, is the first Science-Fiction film to be made in Hungary, and is understandably felt to be something of an achievement, but by Western standards it is not remarkable. Science Fiction, to be successful, needs a great deal of either imagination or money. What with, first, 2001, and now the moon-landings on television, we have become exacting in the matter of visible equipment, though works of genuine vision are as rare as ever. In *The Windows of Time*, there was a good deal of ingenuity, chiefly concentrated on devising means of keeping the action confined within simple sets, but ingenuity is no substitute for imagination, and is not enough.

The Festival also saw Hungary's first absurdist film, *The Tót Family* (*Isten Hozta, Örnagy Úr*), based on the novel by István Örkény, and directed by Zoltán Fábri from his own script. The film, shown out of

competition, has some beautiful comic performances, and offers a criticism of bourgeois standards of value and behaviour, but falls to some extent between two stools. It is both too cruel and not cruel enough, reminiscent in tone of early numbers of *Punch*. It is ironical that Fábri, who has sometimes been criticized for the cruel streak which some have seen in his films, should here have dulled the edge of his satire just when an extra sharpness was needed.

Fábri showed another film, which was awarded the second prize of the Festival. An American-Hungarian co-production, with a number of English boys in the principal parts, *The Paul Street Boys* (*A Pál Utcai Fiúk*) shows, in the feuding of two rival gangs of children, the pointless wastefulness of war and its heroic sacrifices. Both the Fábri films are in colour, and this seems to have in each case softened their impact. One misses the characteristic Fábri incisiveness, which, in *Merry-Go-Round*, gave to the love story the grave intensity of passion, and which enabled him, in *Late Season*, to combine farce and tragedy in a homogeneous work.

His treatment in that film, of horrors, in this case concentration camps, as elements in a farcical situation, was seen at Pécs this year to have been part of a growing feeling that horrors could no longer be shown straight, but must be given some formal quality in order to retain any meaning. In *Impostors* (*Impoztorok*) directed by Félix Máriássy, the scenes of tyranny and persecution are shown as it were symbolically, in that the images are brief and unemphatic, with a purely formal soundtrack. This seems to me to be an important development. Hungarian films are still to a large extent concerned with making sense of recent history, and, since this involves a good deal of tyrannical action, the tendency away from a naturalistic realism in this respect opens up a whole new avenue of approach. It is significant that the most horrifying representation of tyranny was a sequence from Sára's film, showing the delousing of a group of gipsies, including the shaving of heads – of women as well as men. Sára holds his camera unflinchingly, without a single cut, during one such performance, and the sense of violation is overwhelming.

More traditional, but impressive and moving, was *Palm Sunday* (*Virágvasárnap*), directed by Imre Gyöngyössi, with a marvellous performance by Frantisek Velecky as a priest, Father Simon, whose dedication is written in every aspect and every move. The movement of events and the people involved in them are put forward with a richness of texture which both extend and support the figure of Father Simon, so that he exists as a character delineated, not in isolation, but in the exchanges between himself and the world. He is unique and wholly withdrawn, and yet wholly given; it is a tremendous portrait.

The new Jancsó, *The Confrontation* (*Fényes Szélek*), eagerly awaited, proved to be the most baffling. Moving with the absolute confidence of the born film-maker, Miklós Jancsó has made a film wholly ambiguous and wholly autonomous. Rooted though it is, like all his films, in historical fact, it stands nevertheless as a work in which, more than in any that he has yet made, the form is the film and the film is the form. It is, as it were, a politico-historical musical, set in the events of 1947 but in the dress of today, with endless folk and revolutionary songs (Hungarian and other) and a continuous movement, either gyrating and serpentine, or the direct ebb and flow of attack and retreat. Basically it tells of an attempt by members of one of the newly-formed People's Colleges to persuade the boys of a Church School of the shortcomings of their own establishment and the virtues of the new order. Their methods are a little extreme and the leaders are, in their turn, reproved and dismissed by their own superiors. There is a bursting healthfulness about the People's College members which is the embodiment of confident self-righteousness, and which immediately excites sympathy for their victims. When they are themselves disciplined, they excite sympathy in their turn, and their bewilderment is seen to be that of every idealist whose dreams have been overtaken by reality. From being the willing tyrants they have become themselves tyrannized over, and the film ends inconclusively with the promise, or threat, of further changes so that authority will always be one jump ahead of those who have created it. The ambiguity of the film as a whole is seen in every part. There is a point at which a folk-dance group is brought to the Church School in order to show how happy and civilized the People's College members are. They are brought in police transport, and their sudden, abrupt arrival is compellingly reminiscent of tanks sweeping into a city. In another sequence the burning of outdated bourgeois books is made to seem no different from other holocausts. The film is in colour and full of restless movement, but the relentless impetus of the rhythms, the commanding vigour of some of the men, and the monolithic sturdiness of some of the girls, make colour, music, and movement into elements of heaviness and domination.

One of the pleasures of the Festival was the presence of two films by women directors. It was the more agreeable in that it was no isolated instance but reflected a tendency in Hungarian film-making as a whole. Last year Márta Mészáros, an experienced maker of documentaries, showed her first full-length feature at Pécs. She was the first woman to be given the opportunity to make a feature film and much depended on her success. *The Girl* (*Eltávozott Nap*), which she wrote as well as directed, was a work of such individual vision and quiet authority that it opened the way to her fellows. *The Lady From Constantinople* (*Sziget a*



The Confrontation

Száraz földön) which was recently shown at the London Film Festival, was Judit Elek's first feature. She made one of the remarkable 1956 group of young pupil directors at the Film Academy; this included István Szabó and Pál Gábor, whose first feature, *Forbidden Ground* (*Tiltott Terület*) was also shown at Pécs this year. The Balázs Béla Studio

had recently been formed to give opportunities to beginners, and under its aegis Judit Elek made three short films, which she wrote as well as directed, including the much acclaimed *How Long Does Man Matter?* (*Meddig él az Ember?*). *The Lady from Constantinople* derives from her own observation and experience, but has been enlarged into a genuinely imaginative creation, with a remarkable performance by Manyi Kiss, one of the most famous of Hungarian actresses, as the old lady.

The other woman to show at this year's Festival is Lívia Gyarmathy, whose *Do You Know 'Sunday-Monday'?* (*Ismeri a Szundi-Mandit?*) offered a picture of industrialized living in which the customary sense of strain was entirely absent. Instead, in a film of great innocence and charm, she shows the machines being in a quiet way dominated by the people, used by them as a means of earning a living, but not impinging on them or governing their personal behaviour. The director owes a clear, and acknowledged, debt to Jacques Tati, but she has in no sense copied him. The film is entirely her own, refreshing and cheerful and happily free of didacticism.

A contemporary of Lívia Gyarmathy at the Film Academy was Pál Sándor, whose first feature was shown at Pécs last year. This year's Festival offered a chance to see again some of last year's films, and a second viewing of Sándor's *Clowns on the Wall* (*Bobóc a Falon*) confirmed the impression of a strongly lyrical talent at work. It gives a picture of adolescence as a time when childhood still clings while adult life begins to form. Gábor Ferenczi, who plays the lead, is quite remarkably moving. With a very young, softly rounded face, and a bass masculine voice, he embodies the balance between child and man in a way that is at the same time deeply erotic and luminously innocent.

It was a varied Festival in contrast to the even level of the films last year, but certain qualities are constant. In view of the nature of much that is now offered in the West, it is worth pointing out that the Hungarians at least have discovered the fascination of the normal and the sane.

The Festival included a homage to Viktor Gertler and Frigyes Bán, who, by a sad coincidence, had died only a few days before. A quotation from Bán's *The Soil Under Your Feet*, in Sára's *The Upthrown Stone*, was in fact the perfect tribute. Its context was a recognition of the continuing importance of the film in the development of the country, and, by incorporating it in a triumphant new work, it acknowledged the living fruitfulness of Bán's pioneering achievement.

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Three East European Directors Makavejev, Menzel, Jancsó

Philip Crick

The nomadic actor, the small-time circus man, with his family – these have for years recurred as notable characters in European cinema. In *The Seventh Seal*, for example, Bergman uses a juggler and his wife as a form of innocent reproach against a world plunged in evil and racked by fear of doomsday. The film, *Sawdust and Tinsel*, also upholds Bergman's special feeling for this milieu. Such characters remain outsiders. Suffering is their natural lot; but in the hour of performance, they acquire a magic which lifts them above misery. It is a kind of power which they alone have, and which is denied to their gaping admirers.

Nearer our own time, certain East European directors have used the circus artiste as a means for making emotional statements which pass beyond the needs of story. Makavejev does this in his film: *Man Is Not A Bird*. This piece has a raw, near-sarcastic strength. Rudinsky, a top engineer visits the ugly mining region of the Bora, in Yugoslavia. He is due to assemble an important plant in a copper-smelting works. He meets Raika, a sensual and bored hairdresser. She arranges for Rudinsky to lodge at her parents' home. While Rudinsky is busy at work, the parents go away for a few days. When he returns, Raika seduces him, but Rudinsky remains far more involved with his work than with her. Raika, opportunist by nature, then follows up a second sexual lead with a local lorrydriver. On the occasion of a presentation of a medal to Rudinsky for outstanding labour, Raika plays truant, and spends the time in frolic with her lorrydriver. Later, she makes a bid to regain favour with Rudinsky, but he rejects her and leaves the district. There is a hint in the closing shots that Rudinsky comes, at this point, very near to murdering her.

Told straight, this narrative could make a film of fifteen minutes' length; but of course the fiction is a means to more complex ends; and in his treatment of a series of secondary scenes Makavejev's canvas

grows to feature size; and the film develops a strong philosophic undertone. A mosaic of events builds a strong sense of place, people, and of the fabric of living.

Truffaut, in an interview some years ago, compared the making of his films to a series of circus turns. Makavejev brings a similar approach to cinema, although he prefers jumps in fictional space and time to Truffaut's jumps in mood. *Man Is Not A Bird*, is prefaced by a hypnotist who warns against the bad social effects of superstition. Later in the film, we see the same hypnotist in a key scene. An audience seized with mirth watch a number of volunteers floundering about on the stage in the belief that they have become birds. The audience is of course laughing at its own credulity, as Makavejev's clever editing stresses.

In another incident, the wife of a brutish worker (named Barbool) who has suffered many beatings at her husband's hands, gains a sudden moment of insight. 'From now on' she says to a friend 'no more hypnosis'. In the context of the story, it is clear that she has linked in her mind the domination of her husband with the spellbinding power of the state. They can both mean enslavement for the enamoured subject. She has accidentally uncovered brainwashing in its most subtle form. It seems clear that in such episodes Makavejev is engaging in comment on Yugoslav society, itself. At the same time, it could not be argued that the film is in any way anti-government. Makavejev never makes the national issue an overriding concern. He is not a director in search of a simple cause. His is a personalist art.

Makavejev is sympathetic yet unsentimental in his observation of people. Emotion is not ignored, but is treated with a short restraint. It is what people do to each other, and with their lives, which interests him, and which causes his irony. From what they do, he does not go on to moralize. Instead he describes, exposes, explains. But, always that is done with a regard for the contradictions which any event is bound to hold. He takes a number of circumstances and themes and weaves them into a system of interacting forces, into a cluster of commitments.

It is by these means, that the crosscutting at the end of *Man Is Not A Bird*, between the bizarre Beethoven concert in the machine shop, and Raika, who is elsewhere, gains its overwhelming ironic effect. The lorrydriver aims a jet of water from a phallic hose at the giggling Raika, safe behind the windscreen of the lorry. Then we are swung back to the choral orgasm of the ninth symphony, where Barbool wanders lost and uncomprehending. Actual catharsis, and sublimated release, are here juxtaposed, with a bias, one suspects, on the part of Makavejev towards the actual. Beethoven is not burlesqued; but the context in which he is



Capricious Summer

played, the gulf between half-naked copper-smelters and cellists in stiff shirts, their cultural disparity, is pointed up.

There is more than a hint, too, that Makavejev may regard art itself as just another form of hypnosis, an attitude that recalls Bergman's confessed illusionist view of cinema. Through such means the idea of the hypnotist passes from the concrete reference to the level of a value-judgement. The circus entertainer is a pretext. He provides a fluid image for an inquiry into the nature of society. As in his earlier film, *Switchboard Operator*, two ways of viewing the world are put into conflict: sensuality versus discipline. But the settlement of the issue is not by straight vote. Makavejev can see the virtues and faults in both.

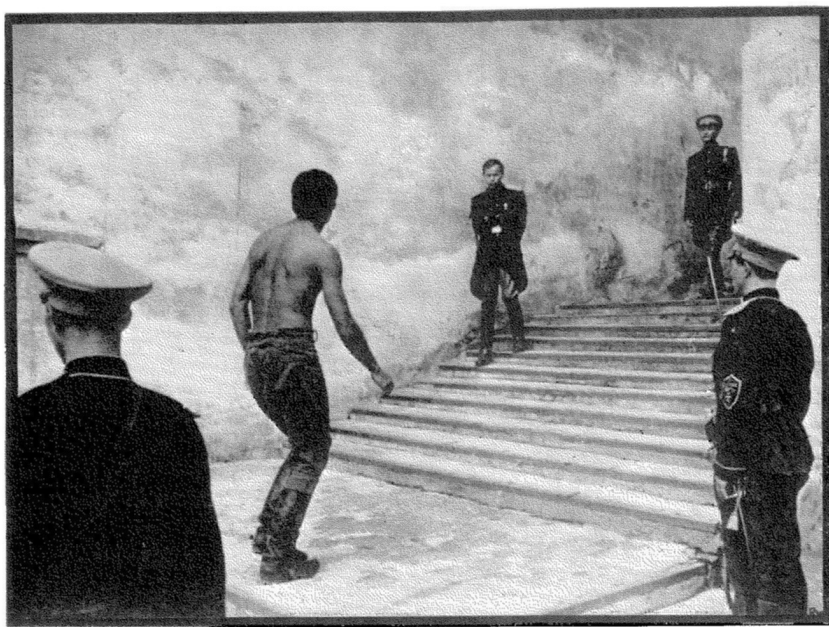
In Czechoslovakia, too, the stunt artist has provided a rich theme. The forerunner of the genre was Vavra's *Romance For Trumpet*, in which a tormented love affair involves a girl from a passing caravan. More recently, Jiri Menzel has taken up a similar idea in his comedy, *Capricious Summer*. His previous film, *Closely Observed Trains*, set in an obscure railway station during the Nazi terror, traces the spiritual journey of a young novice from awkward adolescence to tragic manhood. The stress in this film is on the idea of *initiation* as a key to a true under-



Capricious Summer

standing of life; and a link is made between sexual effectiveness and effectiveness as a man caught up in the struggle against the conqueror. Menzel uniquely manages to compound humour with terror, as he unfolds the adventures of young Milos, but compassion is not absent either.

Capricious Summer is lighter in tone, and harks back to the mood of Renoir in *Partie de Campagne*; but where Renoir was both lyrical and nostalgic, Menzel moves over to wit and analogy. This film spins out in smooth colours a kind of glum splendour. Once again, potency is a central issue. The three riverside loafers: Antonin (played by the director), the Canon, and the Major, represent perhaps three petty-bourgeois types native to that region in the thirties. Into their quiet world rolls the caravan owned by Ernie, a tightrope walker. Each of the three men, attracted by Ernie's wife, proves in his own way both his incompetence and his impotence. Ineffectuality in living is matched by ineffectuality in loving. But thin, wispy Ernie, who is barely able to keep his balance on his striped pole, is at least potent, and retains his wife against the incursions of these bachelor rivals, who seem driven into adventure by boredom as much as by desire. It falls, in the end, to Antonin, to sew up



Red and White

the Canon's injured ear-lobe, after a brawl, The Canon dare not go to a doctor for fear of scandal. As Antonin tends the Canon's wound (with a fish-hook in place of a needle) he rebukes the Canon for his unworldly attitude to art. Cunningly, here, Menzel speaks through Antonin's lines. The scared priest, and the convulsed audience, are treated to a quasi-stalinist homily on the need to link art with economics. Once again, we find a political reference in which dogma is made to seem absurd, sandwiched, as it is, between reactions of hilarity and anguish.

In both *Capricious Summer* and *Man Is Not A Bird*, a tightrope walker appears. It would seem that this figure of the circus world, the man who can transfix the crowd, so long as he keeps his balance, but who drops to death if he deviates, has been taken by these two directors as a kind of embodiment of the creative artist trapped between the claims of conformism, on the one hand, and free speech, on the other.

Though his concerns may be similar the methods of the Hungarian director Jancsó must be sharply distinguished from those of Menzel and of Makavejev.

Jancsó's feeling is, in the first place, for the collective. His camera plunges into situations, weaves through the members of a crowd, or a regiment, or a firing squad, prowls through them while they too prowl.



Red and White

The effect is of people pacing past people, and of a camera passing round and through knots of individuals, whose ranks are always dissolving, and opening. Such prowling is not random; it lights up the most significant feature in an area of crisis. It acts like a spotlight on the crowd, and catches the significant individual at his moment of decision. One has the sensation of being inside the eye of a tropical fish, swirling through an aquarium packed with other species. In Jancsó, shoals of people erupt into importance, wheel away, subside. From the short-lived flux, short-lived commanders emerge; but they only take individuality from their connexion to the group. If the leader makes an error, or is killed, interest shifts immediately elsewhere.

To deal with his themes of the collective, and of the way in which power works through groups, Jancsó chooses the minor offbeat historical crisis. Isolation is obtained by cutting the ensemble away from the surrounding historical events which give his groups their *raison d'être*. For example, the struggles, in *Red and White*, between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, take place in an immense plain fretted with woodland where there is no other trace of the civil war. In the case of *The Confrontation*, the town behind the seminary seems undisturbed and lifeless, although the young students who flood into the school courtyard must have come from that selfsame town. It



Red and White

is this artifice of 'cutoff' which gives Jancsó the chance for a form of stylization, which is very near to ballet.

In *The Confrontation*, there are no heroes and no villains. The film treats, on the surface, simply of the efforts of a group of zealous young Communist students to wean the pupils of a Roman Catholic seminary away from the faith. The students, having police support, are able to give orders, to herd and move about the listless, passively resisting Catholics. It is a situation in which, through ideological zeal, and inexperience, they blunder.

They try various devices. They challenge, they cajole. They invite debate. They trail their ideals before the enemy like a flag waved in front of an apathetic bull. There is no response. They try involving the other side in national dances. Here, a little warmth is generated, but it soon peters out. The power which they enjoy over their opponents destroys what they wish to do. Then, four of the boys are arrested by the policemen. Any goodwill there had been evaporates. The action provokes a considered reaction in return. The Catholics lose their temper and overturn a police jeep. Recriminations follow. So it goes on, a kind of *danse macabre* of attraction and repulsion, threaded by sudden disagreements among the agitators. In the event, the Communist

students overlay their hand, and come very near to burning books. Frustrated by the ineffectiveness of both friendliness and taunting, they conclude by smashing the windows of the still passive school with stones. In a curious way, non-violence wins.

It is the Communists who are seen to have acted as rather naïve bullies, yet at the same time the sheep-like character of most of the Catholic pupils does nothing to commend them. Here and there an individual with moral courage stands out, such as the ex-Jewish boy who has been adopted by the Church, and who refuses to be intimidated, by the young leader Laszlo, or by his female successor.

Eventually, senior students from another college condemn the actions of Laszlo and his cadre. The question of morality does not come into it. It has not been *wrong* to force the enemy boys to wear dunce's hats, or to humiliate them. It has not been wrong to strip off and wear the robes of the clergy in mockery, as some of the girls do. It is a 'tactical error'. Finally, the student cadre finds itself accused of excesses, and in disgrace. The real religious fanatics in this film are shown to be Laszlo and his female accomplices. The world is interpreted through Marxist-Leninist clichés, so that it can be said of them throughout the action, that they know not what they do.

At the same time, their penetration of the closed social order of the Church leads to some result. At least one priest revokes his position. However, Jancsó avoids too sharp an underlining of the human errors involved. His concern is to disclose the dangerous violence which lies just under the surface of collective action, and to bring out the dialectic of power, wherein love and compassion are total casualties.

The Confrontation is a muted version of its predecessor *Red and White*. Jancsó does not seem to be engaged in oblique criticism of the régime. He does, however, seem to be saying that though Communism may solve the problem of the distribution of wealth, it is a long way from solving the just distribution of power; and that power is more terrible than the guns which represent it.

The leaders who emerge from the cadre, and walk the tightrope of decision quickly make errors and lose confidence. The power-game requires more skilled equilibrists than these intoxicated children. From their performance, Jancsó distances himself and the audience, too. Whereas both Menzel and Makavejev track in close to the person, and to intimate life. Jancsó's eye is public and dispassionate. He speaks through the language of the crowd in action. Menzel and Makavejev need symbols, and have found them in particular characters. Jancsó dispenses with symbol and with character. His is a behaviourist cinema.

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Working in the Pressure Cooker

Douglas Camfield talks to Tom Gale about directing in television

Douglas Camfield has directed 77 drama productions for television. These include the classic serial, After Many a Summer (1967), Play to Win (1966) and Number Thirty Approximately (1968) – productions in the Thirty Minute Theatre Series, a large number of Dr. Who episodes, Crime of Passion (1968) and And so to Murder (1969) – plays in the Detective Series, three plays in the current Paul Temple Series and several Z-Cars episodes.

TG: Can you say how you first started in television?

DC: I'd originally fancied myself as an artist, and at fifteen, I'd written to David Hand, one of Walt Disney's lieutenants, included a batch of drawings, and asked what the score was with regard to breaking into animated cartoons. Yes, I had talent, replied kindly Mr Hand and training was recommended, so off to the York School of Art I went.

By the time I was eighteen, I'd gone off the idea of cartoons, taken an interest in designing for feature films and ended up wanting to be a director. I'd also decided that as an artist I was a non-starter, so it was probably a wise decision, anyway. . . . Two years of National Service followed, and on demob, I began the long, long grind. I must have written to every film producer, director and studio in the country, trying for an opening either in the cutting-rooms or as a third or fourth assistant, but nobody wanted to know. The big problem was one that's still with us today – the union ticket. And the equation was the classical one: No-job-unless-you-have-a-ticket-and-no-ticket-unless-you-have-a-job. In fairness, you couldn't blame the ACTT for looking after its own. There had been, and still was, a lot of unemployment in the Film Industry. Taking on new people would only have aggravated the problem.

So, I got a job in York Public Library, carried on writing my eloquent letters and read every book in stock on the Cinema. Sooner or later, I told myself, my luck would change.

TG: And did it?

DC: Well, it did – but it took four years!

When Independent Television was launched in 1954, the BBC was

suddenly denuded of key technicians and production people, as swarms of them crossed channels to work for 'the Competitor'. To deal with this situation, the Corporation planned to recruit an intake of new blood. I'd been pestering the Supervising Editor of the BBC Film Unit for about a year – with one of my letter-a-month campaigns – so, at least he knew I was keen, which resulted in my being shortlisted for one of the newly-created posts of trainee assistant film editor. By then, I'd come down to London, been sacked from a job with W. H. Smith & Son, and was currently working for a firm of woolbrokers in the City. When the Selection Board was announced, I'd only been with them for six weeks, part of a desperate plan I'd formulated to save £100 in order to buy myself into a Repertory Company as a trainee assistant stage-manager and infiltrate films from the theatre. . . .

My Board interview was at 5.45 p.m. at Broadcasting House during a busy weekday, and being a new boy at the firm, I couldn't leave work a second before 5.30 p.m. After all, I might not get the BBC post, in which case, I would be very glad to stay down among the wool for a while longer. Problem. Could I make it from Moorgate to Portland Place in fifteen minutes flat? I tried the route on two evenings prior to the interview, and found that if the train came on time, the crowds were not too thick on the escalators *and* the traffic lights were with me, I could make it – running flat out all the way.

It seemed likely that I would come into the interview purple-faced and panting, so the situation had to be turned to advantage. With too many candidates chasing too few jobs, I had to make some kind of impact on the Board, to stand out among what, after a few days' interviewing, would become a mass of half-remembered or totally-forgotten faces.

So, I wrote a simple film script about a candidate for a BBC Board who has to get from Moorgate to Portland Place in fifteen minutes, and what happens to him en route. Arriving at the interview with only seconds to spare, I marched in and handed out carbon copies of the script with some terribly flamboyant line like: 'Gentlemen, one of the problems you face is to find out whether or not I have a visual sense. Perhaps this will help. . . .'

Gimmick or not, I heard a few weeks later that I had one of five cutting-room vacancies. I was off the startmark at last. . . . Among the other four by the way were Jack Gold of *Bofors Gun* fame, and Michael Tuckner, a current director of many fine plays and features.

TG: How valuable do you consider your cutting-room experience was?

DC: Absolutely invaluable. The BBC gave an excellent training in all aspects of film editing, but I soon discovered that if one became a fully-fledged film editor, it was virtually impossible to progress any further unless one had a university degree. One had become a 'specialist' and that was that. The end of the line. After about a year as assistant film editor, I decided that the wisest course would be to switch 'ladders' and try to work my way up to director, in a different department.

TG: Were you able to change departments easily?

DC: No! Grace Wyndham Goldie, Head of the all-embracing Talks Department, seemed most reluctant to consider anybody who had not been to university. The Drama Department was totally hung-up on the theatre and regarded with grave suspicion any applicant who had not been an actor or worked on the stage in at least some capacity, or again, had a university degree. Light Entertainment held no great attraction for me, and was similarly looking towards the theatre for its future talent.

But, water will wear away a stone, and after repeated applications, I managed to pass a Selection Board for trainee assistant floor manager in 1957. Many more years were to pass. I hit a period where nobody seemed to die, leave or move on. Promotion up the Studio Management ladder was painfully slow. At the final count, I was an assistant floor manager for four years, a floor manager for two and a production assistant in Drama Department for a further two before the doors opened at last and I got the opportunity to direct a *Doctor Who* episode in 1964 when a director went sick. It went well and I was given a complete serial to do as a result. More followed and I was a director at last.

The positive side of this over-long apprenticeship was that I had been given the opportunity to work for a great many directors, some good, some bad and a few brilliant. I learned all I could from all of them.

TG: Would you say your experience was typical of most directors in television?

DC: Unless you are extremely lucky, yes, I often meet young people with ideas of going into TV or Films and they think it's all so easy. A couple of terms at a Film School or an afternoon in Hyde Park with the Bolex and you're made. . . . I suppose that, once in a blue moon, it happens that way. If so, the best of British, but it isn't the system as I know it!

TG: What was the effect of the growth of ITV?

DC: ITV created an alternative source of employment in place of the

BBC's previous monopoly, so the situation arose in this country whereby the freelance TV director could flourish as a sort of samurai hiring his skill to the warlords of rival programme organizations.

TG: Could you say something about the way in which directors are employed?

DC: Directors can be hired in three different ways. On a regular staff contract, on a short-term contract, say for two years – or for the single or group of shows. The true freelance naturally belongs to the latter group. And the money rises steeply in relation to the ephemerality of the assignment!

Over all, the market has tended to favour the freelance for some time now. And the reason is very simple. Television production tends to be more of a young man's game as the medium makes colossal demands on a director, and while some, like the legendary Rudolph Cartier, seem to go on for ever, others are clapped out by forty-five.

I think it all depends on one's personal physiology coupled with a primitive will to survive. . . . From a TV organization's point-of-view, the burned-out staff director is a burden on the payroll, a modicum-of-shows-a-year man waiting for his pension. And so the trend is fewer and fewer staff appointments and more use of the short-term contract and freelance director.

TG: Don't some directors take on the less exhausting role of producer?

DC: Yes. It does happen. Given an administrative sense, a talent for organization and the wisdom not to sit on the backs of the people he hires, the ageing director can often step sideways into the role of producer and start a new, and satisfying career. But, by their very nature, directors are strange, selfish creatures and hate to play second fiddle, so conflicts of a stark new-versus-the-old nature often flare up in these situations. In the film industry, there are a lot of 'name' directors well past the sixty-mark like Hitchcock, Ford, Wilder and Preminger. So, if they can cope, why can't the old hands in TV? The answer is that in the big feature league, the actual pace of working is much slower since there's plenty of time and money around. Heart attacks are more easily kept at bay. . . . In TV, there is a constant casualty rate, and the certainty is that one day, *you* will be a back number. . . .

TG: What are the prospects for the young director today?

DC: In this game there are no absolute rules. It *is* a jungle, and a shade overcrowded at that! Freelance directors are largely a meritocracy, *but* there are scores of people who have made it with little natural talent because they were lucky enough to 'know' someone in the

right place at the right time, or they happen to be very good at chat, if not at anything else.

You may be wildly successful like Peter Collinson, John Boorman or John Frankenheimer – all ex-TV directors – but you may well fritter your life away chasing phantoms. Luck, above all, will be your best and most reliable friend. . . .

If you aim to be a director. Sound out actors because the quality of the life they lead is very similar to the one you will follow, like waiting for the phone to ring and a letter to drop on the mat when you are out of work. But there are weeks when the phone *doesn't* ring and the letter *doesn't* come, and you start worrying about how you will pay the next mortgage instalment.

When you *do* work, you will perhaps direct a rotten script and make a marvellous job of it. You will ask the omnipotent 'them' to watch in the hope that they will have the perception to see that if you can achieve *that* quality of production with *that* load of old cobblers, what could you not do with something worthwhile. . . . Then you subsequently discover that 'they' never watched after all, and you are back right where you started.

The fitter you are, the better the chances of staying on your feet. . . . All the time you are *giving* – ideas, solutions, decisions. Creative thinking can be as exhausting as hard labour.

In addition, you spend a good part of your time on the move. From the production office to the film location, from rushes to the outside rehearsal hall, from the cutting-rooms to the TV studio. You don't always have time to eat properly, and it is sometimes difficult to forget about your current programme when you get home. It can circle about inside your head, shot, cut, dialogue and performance, around and back as you try to sleep.

And you may do a dozen different shows in as many months!

The jobbing director can be subject to a variety of pressures, like having to direct awful scripts which for various 'political' reasons he is unable to rewrite, like having to direct over-ambitious shows which make demands well beyond the limits of the available budget and schedule, yet on which his professional ability will be judged and future assignments allocated, like having to work under producers with whom he is at loggerheads over casting, policy or scripts, like having to complete productions in the teeth of union disputes or work-to-rule, like having to film forty slates a day and it won't stop raining, like trying to get a performance out of a bad actress that

someone else has cast for you, or – horror of horrors – that you have cast yourself!

What is called for is an in-built resistance to nervous breakdown, the ability to scale problems from mountain down to molehill proportions, a ravenous appetite for challenge and the capacity to suffer fools gladly – when expedient.

Your chances of survival lengthen if you are mature enough to see the whole thing in cosmic rather than personal terms. Never let it get on top of you. My advice is: stick a piece of paper on your shaving mirror that says: 'The nearest star is four light years away!'

TG: Where did TV originally recruit directors from?

DC: Not so long ago, directors were filtering into TV from Sound Radio who were largely lacking in any kind of visual sense. Of course, they came bearing gifts. A knowledge of literature and drama, the ability to handle actors and get a good *spoken* performance, but when their work went up on the screen. . . .

Of course, some good TV men *did* graduate from radio but they were comparative rarities. Even today, perfectly good theatre directors come into TV, but, in many cases, they cannot 'think visually'. They are haunted by the proscenium arch, and the best they can produce is a photographed stage production. They are simply a different kind of animal.

When I started working on the studio floor in 1957, there were a lot of theatre-orientated directors still around who suffered from a sort of 'blindness' to the potentialities of the medium, yet their presence was no mystery.

With the expansion of BBC Television after the War, there were only two sources of 'producers' – as directors were called at that time. They could be recruited either from the cinema or the theatre. If you were established as a film director, you probably wouldn't want to know about the new-fangled medium, and if you were a theatre type, you probably welcomed a chance to get in on the ground floor. And since TV had only started in 1936, and had been closed down for the duration of the War, it was likely that people already established in the medium were theatre-orientated themselves, and were the only available mentors for the new recruits.

It was a strange change-over period. There were pioneer TV men like Rudolph Cartier who really understood the visual potential of their medium and forged ahead of their contemporaries, but at the same time, there were producers about who seemed incapable of planning

anything in advance, who actually needed to get into a studio with cast and scenery before anything came together. And the basic reason was lack of 'inner eye'.

TG: How do you detect this 'inner eye'?

DC: Try reading a virgin TV or play script.

Do pictures come alive in your mind? The first time you read it, something should be happening on your private projection screen that you keep inside your head. As you go through a scene, you should be 'seeing' faces, groups, exciting compositions or at least a glimmering of how to stage this or that piece of action. . . .

Of course, when you work on an actual show, various factors contribute to this process. Your designer, for example, will provide your imagination with a giant boost as you discuss and eventually decide on the shape of sets. Deciding on a location will give definition to your ideas about the film sequences, and even choosing mood music can give tangible shape to still-woolly notions of how a scene in a script will go. When you actually come to plan your show in detail, you should be away like a rocket, image after image flooding your mind as you plot the moves of your characters and 'hear' them speak their dialogue.

You will probably try every scene in many different ways until the moment when the visual and dramatic elements have fused into a satisfactory cohesion, good enough, at any rate, to take to outside rehearsal and thrash out with the real actors. And this process is only part of a whole. For side-by-side with *what* you want to see, you work out *how* it will be seen in terms of camera positions, lens swings, angles, booming positions, cutting and all the rest.

Without a fully-functioning 'inner eye', you won't get past the first page of the script.

TG: Presumably the 'inner eye' is not the only quality of a prospective TV director.

DC: Try getting by without patience!

You can work on bread-and-butter programmes for years at a stretch without any guarantee that you will ever get the chance to do anything better. You need patience to write countless work-seeking letters to film tycoons, heads of TV drama departments and producers, with the probability that most of them will never be answered, let alone result in a job. In many areas of the Entertainment Industry, basic good manners are in short supply.

Two years ago, and with a lot of shows to my credit, I wrote three letters, in a row, to the producer of a prestigious TV Play series. I'd never met him, but wanted to be considered as a director for one of his forthcoming productions. So, I requested an interview. All the letters were ignored. And we both worked in the same department! This sort of thing is commonplace and it would be easy to produce a dossier of such churlishness.

You have no choice but to contain your anger, chalk it up to experience and vow that if you are ever in a similar position of power, you will try and behave more like an adult and less like a spoilt child.

TG: How personal are TV programmes? How far can the TV director impose his ideas?

DC: Film and TV production is a group activity and in each case, the director is the key person for 'sewing' the whole thing together and giving it shape, pace, cohesion and atmosphere. This demands the ability to 'get across' often complex ideas to a large number of people, so that they can play their parts in carrying out your grand design.

British TV still has its quota of directors who cannot express themselves in clear-cut terms concerning *what they want*. Their shows are inevitably a mess, formless 'committee' jobs that go out on transmission with all the joins showing, performances uneven and camera-work wobbly and indecisive.

The good director gets an iron grip on his production from the very beginning, making sure that everyone who works for him is tuned in to his concepts. Actors, technicians and production personnel will always give their unstinted backing to the director who knows what he wants, and how to lead everyone to the point where he gets it.

Perhaps the best approach is that of a benevolent dictator, clear about his goals, willing to listen to a serious suggestion and use it if any good, applying the veto if it is not, and all the time remaining absolutely in control both artistically and technically.

Composing for Films

Interview with Michael J. Lewis by Peter C. Amsden

Michael Lewis was born at Aberystwyth in 1939. He has written and conducted the scores of *The Madwoman of Chaillot* and the recent film production of *Julius Caesar*. Currently he is working on *The Man Who Haunted Himself*.

PA: How did you start writing music for films?

ML: Well the direct answer to that is, when I received a phone call one morning at 8.45 a.m. from Bryan Forbes, who at that time was shooting *The Madwoman of Chaillot* at the *Studios de la Victorine* in Nice. He asked me if I would like to write the music for *The Madwoman*; needless to say, in 24 hours I was there. I had done some work for Bryan Forbes before, not for a film, but for a musical which we wrote together. The music for the last five of Forbes's films was written by John Barry, but at this time he was not available as he was working on his score for *The Lion in Winter*. Bryan Forbes had always said that he hoped one day the opportunity would come for me to write a score for a film. Here was the opportunity, because a song was wanted urgently and the man he had used before was not available. He asked me to step in, which of course I was delighted to do.

PA: So it all really started with this one song?

ML: In the Café Francis scene the original play required a folk singer to walk in the square, singing, and of course they could not shoot this scene until they had the song. I went down there, and what in fact they were doing was giving me a four-day trial. If I came up with the tune within that time the job was mine and thank God within the first half hour I was writing – the tune was there so the job was mine.

PA: What sort of music career did you have before this?

ML: I studied music, harmony, and counterpoint at the Guildhall School, of Music in London and when I finished there I realized I had to earn a living and saw very little prospect in writing church anthems, I was very classically minded at that time. So I taught for two and a half

years in Tottenham where the children introduced me to Pop and consequently to music of a lighter idiom than I had been accustomed to working with. After two and a half years of teaching I had developed a certain melodic style of writing and I gave up teaching for five years and wrote on a very limited income until this opportunity from Bryan Forbes came along, which changed everything.

PA: Have you written scores for any films since *The Madwoman*?

ML: Earlier this year I wrote and conducted the score for the new film production of *Julius Caesar*. The cast is headed by Charlton Heston and Sir John Gielgud. At the moment I am writing the score for the first film to be produced by the new ABPC set-up, starring Roger Moore, called *The Man Who Haunted Himself*.

PA: At what stage in the production are you normally called in?

ML: This varies, usually after the filming has started; it appears to be one of the latter thoughts they have, although on this film, *The Man Who Haunted Himself* I was, in fact, engaged for the job before the filming started.

PA: Do you see the script before the film has got under way?

ML: It all depends, of course, when I come on to a picture, but I always read the script before I accept.

PA: Is the form that the score is going to take discussed with the directors or producers or is this left to you?

ML: The style, content, mood and atmosphere of the score to be written is discussed quite fully with the director and producer because really the composer is the musical extension of the director. Ideally a director should write his own music because he conceives the film, but this is not normally possible, although people like Chaplin have done it. Style and mood of music is a thing which must be discussed thoroughly, I keep in very close contact with the director as I am writing the score and I usually get them over and show them the first fortnight's work. If they have any suggestions there is time to change before the recording sessions and not afterwards. Afterwards is too late, an awful lot of money has been spent.

PA: Could they refuse it?

ML: If they don't like the score or it is not suitable then the only thing to do is reject it. Music has such a powerful influence on the final production.

PA: How would this affect a composer's fees?



Michael Lewis conducts his score for *The Madwomen of Chailot* at the C.T.S. Recording Studios

ML: There is a fee for actually writing the music, which you receive even if they don't like it, but what you then don't receive, which is the major part of income in writing for a film, is the royalties and the broadcast fees of the sound-track which come after the film has been released.

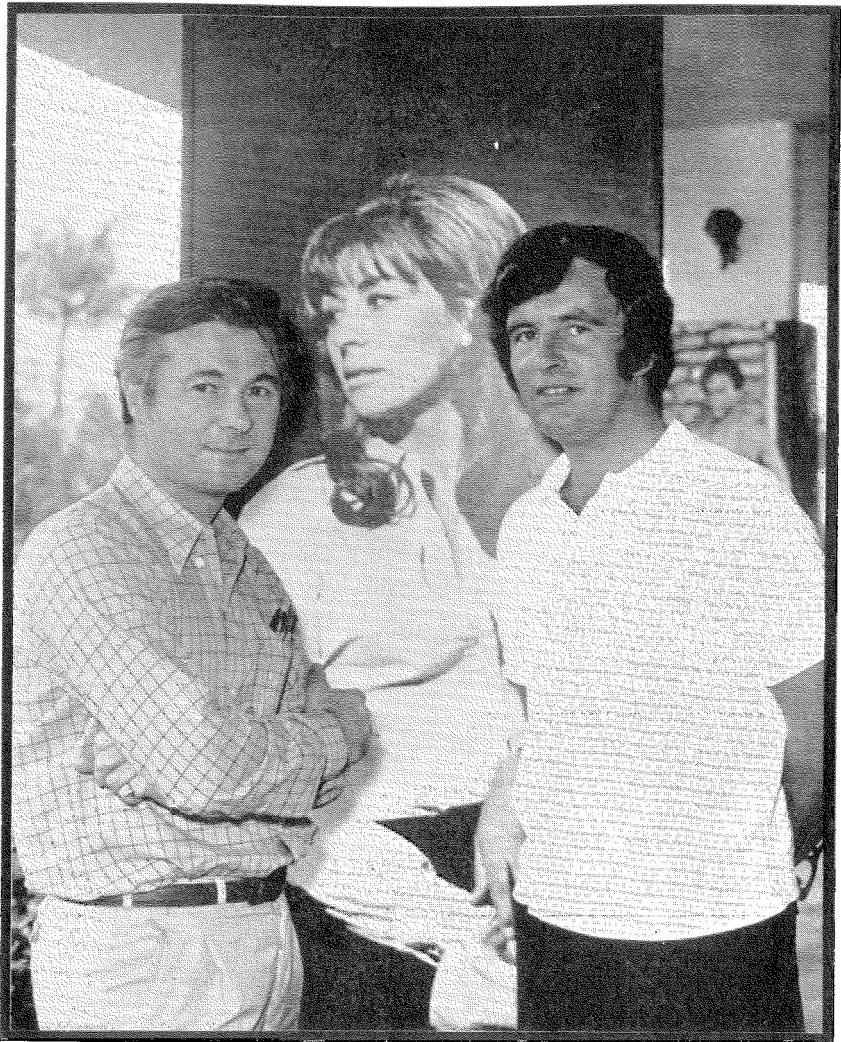
PA: Who finally approves the score?

ML: This is the responsibility of the Director and Producer.

PA: Do you have any say in where and how your music may be used in a film?

ML: There again, this is all discussed before writing starts. I usually see the film through during the rough cut and then again for the fine cut. Perhaps I shall see it once or twice right through and then spend two or three days going through the film reel by reel and deciding exactly where the music should start and finish. Once you have the start and finish points and know the moods and places that you want to pinpoint in the course of that section then writing can begin.

PA: Can you give some idea of the cost of music used in films?



Michael Lewis with Bryan Forbes at a preview of *The Madwoman of Chaillot*

ML: The minimum rate for a musician is £9 per session, so if you multiply that by fifty and add to that the leaders, doubling fees and portorage then £9 is only the absolute basic minimum. For a big film you need at least six sessions. On *Julius Caesar* I had eight and on *The Madwoman of Chaillot* six. The recording session lasts three hours. You can imagine how this soon builds up. On top of this there is, of course, the fee paid to the composer.

PA: Do you have a budget to work to?

ML: Obviously there has to be a limit. A fair average is about £500 per session for a medium/large size orchestra for a large film production. Some films only require small orchestras, but £500 per session is an average budget. Usually one gets 50 per cent before work commences and 50 per cent on completion.

PA: Is commission received on sales outside the use of the score in the film?

ML: Oh yes, if the sound-track is released as an LP then you receive a percentage of the sales; for any broadcasts of the sound-track on radio one receives the PRS, then there is the royalties for music played in the cinemas of this country. This varies from country to country. In Italy one actually receives a percentage of the box office as well. On the other hand in the USA there are no cinema royalties, but this will probably be put right before long.

PA: What considerations do you personally bear in mind when writing scores for films?

ML: The main consideration when writing the score is the picture. The music is an added dimension. The consideration is to add to whatever there is on the screen and one can do this in so many ways. The atmosphere can be greatly enhanced by the score. Drama can be heightened. I think one can learn an awful lot from a lot of people. Whenever I go to the cinema and listen to a score, even if it is not a particularly good one, there is probably something that can be learnt. From the masters in the field one can learn many things. I think every artist, every writer and every composer is influenced by everything around him, including others working in his medium.

PA: How, in practical terms, do you set about writing a score?

ML: Once I have been to the studios with the director and producer, and we have discussed the film reel by reel, and music length measurements have been made, I start work. I have a Moviola in my studio and I have the music sections of the film in front of me, so I can see the action and listen to the dialogue, note expressions on faces and all of these various things. This comes back to what we said before about the considerations. The main consideration is the picture and I want the picture in front of me so that I can see what is going on.

PA: What do you think of the idea of writing major works for film scores, as for example the sort of thing done by Prokofiev?

ML: Prokofiev wrote *Lt. Kijé*, and then adapted the score as an independent work, much in the same way as Vaughan Williams; he wrote the Antarctica Symphony which came out of the score for *Scott of the Antarctic*.

PA: Do you think, though, that writing major works for films is a logical way of tackling the problem, or is it better to write 'piece-meal'?

ML: There again the consideration is the film. When you write film music you are totally governed by the action. This does not mean to say that the music has to be purely effect. It can be music in its own right. I believe it should be capable of standing up away from the picture. Not every section you write for a film, but major sections should be able to do this.

PA: Do you foresee any future developments in the use of music in films?

ML: There may be developments but it is difficult to guess what they will be. The possibility of music *not* being used in films though is very remote, because it is such a major influence. It is an added dimension, and all part of the art form of the final production.

PA: Are there any particular kinds of film that you would like to write for?

ML: I want to have the opportunity to write scores for as varied a type of film as possible. I did *The Madwoman of Chaillot* which was a fantasy. *Julius Caesar* was an historical classic and I am now working on *The Man Who Haunted Himself* which is a psychological, spine chilling, entertaining thriller. I look forward to working in the not too distant future on a big romantic film and I would then like to do a Western. At the moment I am completely 'hooked' on writing for films because I find it a great inspiration. There are many other things that I want to do, but at the present time I want to perfect, to the limits of my ability, the art of writing for film, because I enjoy it so much.

Book Reviews

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

Studio Vista, *Movie Paperbacks*. 15s.

PIERROT LE FOU

Jean-Luc Godard, trans. Peter Whitehead, *Modern Film Scripts*, Lorrimer. 15s.

MASCULINE-FEMININE

Jean-Luc Godard, *Grove Press Inc.*, New York. \$1.95.

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard is an updated edition of the original one which appeared in 1967. The new edition contains additional essays by Michael Walker on *Pierrot le Fou*, Jim Hillier on *Masculin Féminin*, Jean-Louis Comolli and Jacques Bartemps on *La Chinoise*, Robin Wood on *Weekend*, Ian Cameron on *Le Gai Savoir*, and finally, Raymond Durnat on *One plus One*.

The problem with critical anthologies such as this is a familiar one. The writers feel unable to discuss one film in isolation and are frequently forced to relate it to other Godard films, so that the essays too often become a series of observations about Godard and his films in general. In turn, the essay is too short a form for a coherent criticism of Godard's films as a whole to emerge, and at the same time the individual analyses tend to be something less than profound. Jim Hillier's essay is a case in point. He makes some very interesting observations about Godard's films generally, the way in which themes recur but has not produced an essay of comparable depth to Scott Wilson's essay in the Toby Mussman anthology (see *Screen*, Vol. X, No. 6) where he concentrates on the film in question exclusively and his analysis of the cinema visit sequence does more to help us understand, in one page, Godard's 'wordlessly eloquent' style than Hillier in half a dozen. It is good to see Robin Wood's essay on *Weekend* (previously published in *Movie* 16) reappearing again. One may have reservations about Robin Wood's critical approach but, nevertheless, it often opens up areas in Godard's film which would otherwise remain obscure. Here it enables Wood to give us an interpretation of the 'action musicale' sequence and is one of the few occasions in

the book where the critic gets to grips with the stylistic devices employed to put over a statement. The weakness of the essay is its failure to come to terms with the political content and implications which seem to be crucial to an understanding of the film's meaning. It is good to see Raymond Durgnat (by his own admission not one of Godard's leading fans) casting off his customary and annoying brand of intellectual doodling, getting down to some serious criticism and producing one of the best essays in the book. Durgnat argues that the theme of *One plus One* is 'revolution as paralysis': the film is about the remoteness of radical action and the curious ethereality, betrayed by vehemence in radical thought. This essay is full of insight.

On the whole, the additional essays are of a higher standard than those in the original edition. I would still have welcomed an essay on Godard's early shorts and the episodes he contributed to subsequent corporate features (especially an essay on his episode in *Loïen du Vietnam* which has been criminally neglected). It would have been good to see a chapter devoted to a discussion of his style. For anybody seriously interested in Godard's work, this is a volume to have on the shelves along with the Toby Mussman anthology and Jean Collet's book in the *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui* series, for despite its weaknesses it is still infinitely better than Richard Roud's shoddy effort in the *Cinema One* series.

The major frustration of writing film criticism is the sheer impossibility of remembering in detail the content of any film seen perhaps only once or twice. Unlike novels, paintings, or music, we cannot go back to it at will. In this context, Lorrimer's have proved a tremendous source of help in publishing the screenplays of a number of films. They have been particularly generous to Godard. To the screenplays for *Alphaville*, *Le Petit Soldat* and *Made in USA* they have now added *Pierrot le Fou*. Like their other volumes, this is a well-produced book with the extra bonus of some beautiful colour stills. In addition, there is a valuable interview with Godard reprinted from *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Such interviews are particularly helpful in understanding Godard's way of thinking and working. It will be interesting to see further volumes in this series devoted to Godard's later and more inaccessible films.

The Grove Press volume on *Masculin Féminine* can also be warmly recommended. This consists of the full screenplay, well-documented with stills and a host of other items associated with the film. These include a number of international reviews, the two Maupassant short stories on which the film was loosely based, an interview with Godard, and an interview with the female star of the film – Chantal Goya, also two fascinating accounts of Godard at work on the set which give some indication of the extraordinary way in which he works. Philippe Labro's

account describing Godard directing Jean-Pierre Léaud on one occasion contains this irresistible quotation: 'What is it you can't say? If you can't say it, don't say it . . . you are absolutely not thinking, not for a second, about what you're saying . . . You lighted your cigarette; I didn't tell you to do that in this shot. You don't do just any old thing, just because we film the way amateurs do!' (p. 227).

DAVID SPIERS

David Spiers is an editor with Millbank Films.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

Elizabeth Sussex, Studio Vista, *Movie Paperbacks*. 10s. 6d.

One may well be suspicious of any book which on the first page invokes Blake as a suitable figure with which to compare Lindsay Anderson. The best that can be said for this book as a piece of critical analysis is that it is adequate. Too often 'criticism' means little more than a fairly detailed description of the films themselves. One comment in particular stands out as one of the most banal to have been printed. Writing of *This Sporting Life* (p. 70) Elizabeth Sussex declares: 'It shows feelings and is appropriately shot predominantly in close-up or medium shot.' To what films could one not apply that profound observation? She has very little to say about *If* . . . and when it comes to offering an interpretation of the crucial scene of the foetus in the bottle, she gives the floor to Anderson himself. On the volume of work he has produced, does Anderson justify having a book to himself? Surely it would have been more valuable to have written a book about the Free Cinema movement and then to have examined the subsequent careers of its main exponents – Anderson, Reisz and Richardson. Most readers will find the early chapters the most useful because the era of the Free Cinema movement has been so little documented. However, the author exaggerates its importance ultimately in paving the way for the social realist film of the late fifties.

'I think I am very romantic, very idealistic by temperament and perhaps I try to balance this with a certain irony and scepticism. I believe in ambiguity' (Anderson, quoted p. 58). Elizabeth Sussex's biggest failure is her inability to probe Anderson's character and use such insights to help us understand his films, so 'staggered' and 'stunned' does she appear to be by her hero. At times, she only increases our confusion. From the start, Anderson attacked the cinema of his day as being too middle class in its attitudes and outlook, and for its failure to deal with

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pressing political and sociological problems of the hour. What he wanted, he declared, was a 'Britain in which the cinema can be respected and understood by everybody as an essential part of the creative life of the community' (*Declaration* 1957). Yet incredibly, Elizabeth Sussex writes: 'Anderson shows himself to be more Scottish than English in his apparent unawareness of the existence of class' (p. 34). It is hard to see how anyone could say that of an artist who has chosen such determinedly working-class areas for his films and produced such hilarious caricatures of the middle class as those in *If* . . . On another level, she lays heavy emphasis on Anderson's faith in humanity as one of his main inspirations in his early work; of *Every Day Except Christmas* he said: 'I want to make people – ordinary people not just Top people – feel their dignity and their importance' (p. 33). How can attitudes like this be recognized with the appallingly condescending view of 'ordinary people' he offers us in *O Dreamland* where she says Anderson undoubtedly hates his subjects for their passivity and vulgarity; or again, his description of the marchers in his film *March to Aldermaston*: 'the marchers pass those people standing at gates looking at them with the typical unimaginative phlegmatic smugness of the British working classes' (quoted p. 39). Despite an appearance of being aware of these contradictions, Elizabeth Sussex never relates them to the films themselves in an effort to understand Anderson's real attitudes to his documentary subjects.

The recurring theme in all his work, she argues, and one that Anderson openly recognizes is 'the tension between being alone and an almost nostalgic feeling of belonging to a group' (p. 58). But the real ambiguity in Anderson's character, and one which is reflected in his films (in this respect he can be truly referred to as a 'personal' director) emerges at a deeper level. To everything he has done, Anderson has brought his own fervent brand of passion. 'Fighting means commitment, means believing what you say, and saying what you believe' (*Declaration* 1957). He says he was drawn to David Storey's Arthur Machin because of his violent passionate nature, and Mick in *If* . . . represents, according to Anderson, 'life, violence and sex', all that the public school system would deny. The problem is that this passion is closely intertwined with his political views. Despite having to accept the ambiguities of existence as you grow older, he says the problem still is how to affirm the values he stated in his 'Stand Up, Stand Up' article in *Sight and Sound* and to clarify the relationship between the individual and the technological society. So in *If* . . . the school is a microcosm of the social system and Anderson's purpose is to 'show a little, or a limited world which has implications about the big world and about life in general' (quoted p. 72).

But Mick's fusion of passion and politics at the end leads straight to fascism and a sanctioning of the individual's right to seize power by force.

For all Anderson's cant, as with Mick, it is not clear on what political platform his passion is built. It really does seem fanciful, however, to present him as a hero of the New Left as Elizabeth Sussex would have us believe. What sort of New Left member is he who has the Southerner John Ford as his hero? Is his passion really no more than the frustration of somebody kicking against the middle-class background and capitalist system in which he has been inescapably brought up to live and work? This would explain for instance his attraction to the CND marches which he describes as 'a rather splendid, romantic and forlorn gesture', and to Mick in *If . . .*: 'the conflict of idealism – the necessity for it and its impossibility.' For all his passion, Anderson remains an austere and shadowy figure in Elizabeth Sussex's account.

Will the real Lindsay Anderson please stand up?

DAVID SPIERS

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM AND TELEVISION TECHNIQUES

Focal Press. £8 10s.

A number of questions come to mind when reviewing a reference book for *Screen*. Will the book be suitable for school or college library? Does the book provide information of an elementary nature, or is it only suitable for technocrats?

These questions are important, for most members of SEFT are principally concerned with the non-technical aspects of film and television and a reference book will be used to support courses which do not delve too deeply into these factors. On an elementary level, the book must be able to serve as a method of revision. Occasionally, it may also provide the only means whereby some students can find answers to those questions which often occur when they start to think about technical problems associated with production techniques. The Focal Press encyclopedia of Film and Television was examined bearing these questions in mind.

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On first appraisal it would seem to be a formidable task to combine film and television in one volume. Yet the convergence of these two subjects and the need for the specialist in one to understand the other suggests there is a need for this book.

Though the book is primarily technical in nature, it deals with general queries such as 'What is the role of a film director?' This particular question is answered extremely well. Six pages of close print, outlines the director's main tasks, covering details such as the director/actor relationship. A question often asked by a student is 'how does the work of a film director differ from that of a TV director?' This is answered in the subsequent pages, where the TV director's day-to-day tasks are outlined. This simple example shows the value of combining both Film and Television in a single reference book.

Similarly, on a more technical level, excellent coverage is given to 8 mm film work, and it covers not only work with 8 mm cameras, but 8 mm loop cassettes and goes on to explain such things as the problem of daylight projection with concept loop projectors. This coverage is extended to include the use of light meters. There is, for example, a very good article on incident method and its relevance to brightness, range and control in lighting a subject. On 'basic film' therefore, the book is of immediate practical value.

For those lecturers who need to find answers to more advanced problems, and for students who will use this work to extend their knowledge, the book is a good starting-point. For instance, it covers A and B roll neg. cutting, gives threading paths for professional cameras and describes methods of sync sound recording. Answers to sticky problems are also provided: for instance, when putting an optical sound-track on a film, is a negative or positive sound-track required for marrying to a print from a reversal colour master? Surprisingly, a negative track is required. This information is given under Ordering Optical Tracks.

It must be emphasized, however, that there are dangers, when students begin to use this kind of book to advance their knowledge, without reference to the teacher, e.g. the entry against impedance explains its practical relevance to microphones but does not give an adequate definition of impedance. Tutors therefore should comment on the range and application of these books and remind groups of students that they should discuss their findings with the tutors as well as follow up their inquiries with group discussions.

In considering television, it is more difficult to build a reference work because almost every query needs some general understanding of the subject. However, most Colleges of Education now have CCTV units

manned by students and these may well want to use the technical TV sections of the encyclopedia. Generally, first questions are 'What is a sync pulse?' 'What is blanking?' 'What is black level?'; or in another context 'How does a helical scan VTR work?' 'What is the difference between a Vidicon, a Plumbicon, and an Orthicon camera tube and how do they work?' There are entries covering all these queries and they are explained clearly. They do however presuppose a little working knowledge of CCTV units, which is perhaps only to be expected.

At a more advanced level, e.g. when a discussion of television waveform components takes place, the book has an excellent illustration of a 625 50 field television waveform. The information is displayed so that really advanced electronic knowledge is not required. Indeed the whole section on TV principles is a masterpiece of condensation. Many teachers now have to deal with electronic terminology, and yet few have time to explore this field deeply. Articles like these are therefore really valuable. Obviously, as time goes on, more books for the film and TV equipment user (who is not essentially a technician) must be made available. At the moment, few are. The Focal Press *Encyclopedia of Film and Television* is, therefore, excellent for this purpose. It can be recommended for both school and college libraries, as well as being a good private purchase for an individual.

DOUGLAS LOWNDES

Douglas Lowndes is the author of *Film Making in Schools*.

THE CRAZY MIRROR: Hollywood Comedy and the American Image

Raymond Durgnat. *Faber and Faber*. 45s.

In a survey of sixty years of film comedy, Raymond Durgnat has taken on a herculean task that would crush any bona fide film historian. Not content with one struggle, he tackles comic theory in the first sixty-four pages of his book. His bout with the eternal question 'What is comedy?' certainly is a task that has intrigued evaluators before him; and they usually go down for the count of ten. Durgnat goes down for at least the count of nine.

After this setback, the critic known for *Films and Feelings* gets to his feet and offers some stimulating discussions on the many genres of humour on celluloid. He eliminates the musical from his study in favour of the

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cartoon because he views it as an irregular, arbitrary form. Cartooning, he believes, is a genre linked with the total history of the medium. But the animated work might as well have been left out, not only because he treats it sketchily, but because he fails to fit this genre into the total pattern of the book – a focus revealed in the subtitle, *Hollywood and the American Image*.

To readers in England and Europe, Durgnat will seem to have some valid views on the 'American Image'. A few of his interpolations will make Americans recoil and reject his desultory examination of their psyche through the examination of film comedy. Not that his effort is not a noble one. In fact, it should be recognized as a pioneering study that needs to be encouraged. But almost anyone on both sides of the Atlantic could caution him regarding the complexity of comedy – a complexity that makes this form of drama illusive and hard to pin down. He falls into the trap easily. After examining at length the cartoon strip 'L'il Abner', he advances a strange conjecture on the caricature Earthquake McGoon:

As the folksy strong man, brutally and healthily, exposing the sneaky, hypnotic machinations of a sophisticated America, isn't Earthquake a bit of Joe McCarthy (so that a recent panic about Communists is related to the fear of the homosexual enemy-seducer? Such a formulation might well throw some light on, for example, aspects of Moral Rearmament, with its common bracketing of commies and homosexuals).

He also seems to celebrate over such wacky gags as Eddie Cantor's kiss on the mouth by a 'plugugly' (played by the thug of all thugs, Warren Hymer) in *Kid Millions* (1934). Since the kiss is a request from naïve Eddie to a dope posing as his uncle, the interpretation must be more simple than Durgnat's revelation that it is all linked to the 'peasant culture' of the United States. This kind of raw gag was a favourite in the vaudeville routines of the stage-trained Cantor. The dumbness of the baboon-like Warren Hymer, as he risks his masculinity by kissing a man, becomes the real focus of the humour.

Not only does the author's 'reading into' a film diminish the effectiveness of his book, but, at times, it produces an over-all evaluation placed on shaky ground by his reductional premises. While it would seem that he enjoys a position of objectivity in his analysis of political matters in the United States, he oversimplifies the nature of the Democratic and Republican parties. Even in the thirties both parties were plagued (or blessed, depending upon how you look at it) with liberal and conservative factions plus a good number of fence straddlers. Some of his evaluations of the comedies thus are questionable. More specifically,

he seems to believe that a conservative tendency of studio bosses might account for mixed political sentiments or even conservative views in the characters and plottings of the comedies in the thirties. He seems to forget that comedy in the movies, while influenced to a degree by those who control the purse, often knocks those on top, those in power, whether Democrats or Republicans. The pressure of moral censorship, more than studio bosses' political views, has warped the film comedy.

Durgnat's strength, as much as he might see it otherwise, does not lie in extracting a clear picture of an American image from its comedy. His strength exists in his discussion of such comedians as Chaplin and in his common sense evaluations on the social qualities of the sentimental and sophisticated humour of the thirties. He advances valid views and specific examples for his point that many films pivoted under the mechanizations of 'the fantasy of goodwill'. Extended analyses of such works as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), and *My Man Godfrey* (1936) show him grasping and capturing at least *part* of the American image portrayed in the comic cinema.

The author never successfully places one of the best comedians of the thirties, W. C. Fields, into the limelight of his basic premise. He comes closer to his task of discovering something about the American image with the Marx Brothers. He recognizes some of the qualities and weaknesses of comedians Bob Hope, Danny Kaye, Red Skelton, and the team Abbott and Costello. His brief evaluations are enlightening. He overrates Jerry Lewis (a recent, curious trend by a few critics) and seems to slight the team of Laurel and Hardy. Time may prove Durgnat right, but for most evaluators, Lewis is a crude, latter-day phenomenon. Certainly, this comedian has moments, even a few brilliant ones, but the bulk of his work misfires – he can become tediously unfunny as he grinds away with one routine; and, more often than not, shows that he can lift a gag from obscurity and make it twice as dull.

The Crazy Mirror makes a worthy contribution when the author succinctly writes:

Chaplin stands at a confluence of traditions. His pathos, and richness as a character, has its roots in nineteenth-century emotionalism whereas the cool callousness of Mack Sennett is more twentieth century. His sensitivity and his quixotism are as poignant as they are only because blended with scurrility, cynicism and all the comic vices.

And his comparison:

If Keaton is fired by duty rather than ambition, Lloyd is the eager-beaver with pasteurized hopes.

Granted, such statements are simplifications, but they afford the reader a basis for measuring his own views with the author's.

As he progresses into the 1950s and 1960s, the author rightly takes swipes at the unique blend of genres which he calls the 'sentimental and sex comedy,' works with tantalizing titles such as *Pillow Talk* (1959) and *Move Over, Darling* (1963). In his pilgrimage through this era he seems to forget that some works, such as *Stalag 17*, *Bus Stop*, and *One Thousand Clowns* are not pure enough Hollywood products for his analysis. These are Broadway creations bearing many of the characteristics of the stage play and often reflecting the tastes of the playwright and the audience for this medium.

In a final note on the contemporary scene, the author suggests that Hollywood comedies would surpass European 'if they allied their own qualities with European depth'. A good point to be sure. Such a European influence has changed Hollywood. Serious films have caught much of the European spirit but still have kept the distinctive American approach. Comedy, a step behind, is slowly beginning to absorb this influence.

The Crazy Mirror is an interesting, provocative work. For easy reading, a partial image of the United States through its comedy, and the scope of comic films in America, this study is the best so far.

DONALD W. McCaffrey

Donald W. McCaffrey is the author of *Four Great Comedians* and Professor of Cinema and Theatre at the University of North Dakota.

DO YOU SLEEP IN THE NUDE?

Rex Reed. *W. H. Allen*. 36s.

This is a collection of brief character impressions of prominent figures, mainly from the world of theatre and film, including Antonioni, Lucille Ball, Buster Keaton, James Mason, Otto Preminger, Hayley Mills and Marlene Dietrich. Rex Reed links his interview material with a stream of glib journalistic patter. The book sets out to entertain at a gossipy level and there is surprisingly little of relevance to anyone seriously interested in the cinema. The brisk philistinism of Marlene Dietrich sums up the tone of the book: 'There is a whole group of people in America who do nothing but sit around in dark rooms in the Museum of Modern Art and watch old movies. Don't they have anything more important to do with their lives?'

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Cinema Reference Books: Part One

Reading list compiled by Gillian Hartnoll,
Librarian, British Film Institute

In any attempt to list reference books on the cinema, the compiler is soon made aware of the number of titles being produced by Peter Cowie's Tantivy Press (distributed by A. Zwemmer in this country and by A. S. Barnes in the United States). The most ambitious of these is the recently announced *World Filmography* which is intended to cover all silent films and sound feature and short fiction films up to 1967. It will be published in some 70 volumes, over a period of 15 years. Until recently, all the books have been published in the *International Film Guide* series, but the new *Screen* series provides a rather more lavish format.

COWIE, PETER, *editor*

International film guide 1970. Tantivy Press, 1969.

448 pp. illus. bibliog. filmogs.

The seventh edition of this useful annual is 200 pages longer than the original 1964 volume, the main increase being in the World Production Survey which has swollen from 13 to 32 countries. Other regular features include Film Books and Magazines, Film Schools, Art Cinemas and Festivals. Each volume also includes various special features (some of which are listed below) and studies of five directors with full filmographies.

1964: Dictionary of film terms.

Directors: Visconti, Welles, Truffaut, Wajda, Hitchcock.

1965: The growth of the documentary.

Twelve Japanese directors: an index.

Directors: Fellini, Malle, Buñuel, Kubrick, Satyajit Ray

1966: 20 leading cameramen.

The growth of the Western.

Directors: Demy, Brooks, Kurosawa, Rosi, Haanstra.

- 1967: 25 leading composers: an index.
The screen in space.
Directors: Franju, Losey, Polanski, Frankenheimer, Torre Nilsson.
- 1968: 20 film designers: an index.
Directors: Widerberg, Ivens, Lumet, Němec, Antonioni.
- 1969: Guide to title changes of films in four countries.
Directors: Bondarchuk, Forman, Jancsó, Penn, Tati.
- 1970: Leniniane: Lenin in the cinema.
100 recordings of film music.
Directors: Lindsay Anderson, Chabrol, Ichikawa, Pasolini, Skolimowski.

GRAHAM, PETER

A dictionary of the cinema. 2nd ed. Zwemmer, 1968.

175 pp. plates. index. (*International Film Guide* series.)

Director entries predominate, but actors are also quite well represented among the remaining biographical entries, and there are a few subject entries under headings such as *avant-garde*. Inevitably its size limits its usefulness, but a film-title index gets the maximum use out of the entries which are included.

EYLES, ALLEN

The Western: an illustrated guide. Zwemmer, 1968.

183 pp. plates. (*International Film Guide* series.)

Dictionary of the American Western which includes entries for cameramen, script writers and characters such as Jesse James, as well as the actors and directors who form the bulk of the entries. Stills identify the actors and there is a comprehensive index of film titles.

GIFFORD, DENIS

British cinema: an illustrated guide. Zwemmer, 1968.

176 pp. plates. (*International Film Guide* series.)

Dictionary of actors and directors, each entry giving a career outline and a filmography, which lists only British films. The intention is to publish indexes for all the film-producing countries so that people working in different countries will be covered completely eventually, but meanwhile it sometimes results in some rather bizarre entries e.g. the last two entries for Charles Laughton are *Jamaica Inn* (1939) and *Hobson's Choice* (1954). The index lists all the feature films mentioned in the text.

The next volume in this series will be *The Great Cameramen* which will include filmographies for 150 cameramen.

COWIE, PETER

Sweden: 1. Zwemmer, 1969.

224 pp. illus. (*Screen series*.)

Dictionary on the Swedish cinema in which over half the 250 entries are biographical covering directors, actors, cameramen etc., and giving complete filmographies. Other entries give plot synopses and full credits for 70 major films and there is a film-title index with entries under both Swedish and English titles.

HIBBIN, NINA

Eastern Europe. Zwemmer, 1969.

240 pp. illus. (*Screen series*.)

A biographical dictionary covering the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, USSR, Yugoslavia. A film-title index gives entries under English and original titles.

Future titles in the *Screen series* will be as follows:

France, by Marcel Martin

The American Musical, by Tom Vallance

Germany, by Felix Bücher

The Gangster Film, by John Baxter

Japan, by Arne Svensson

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